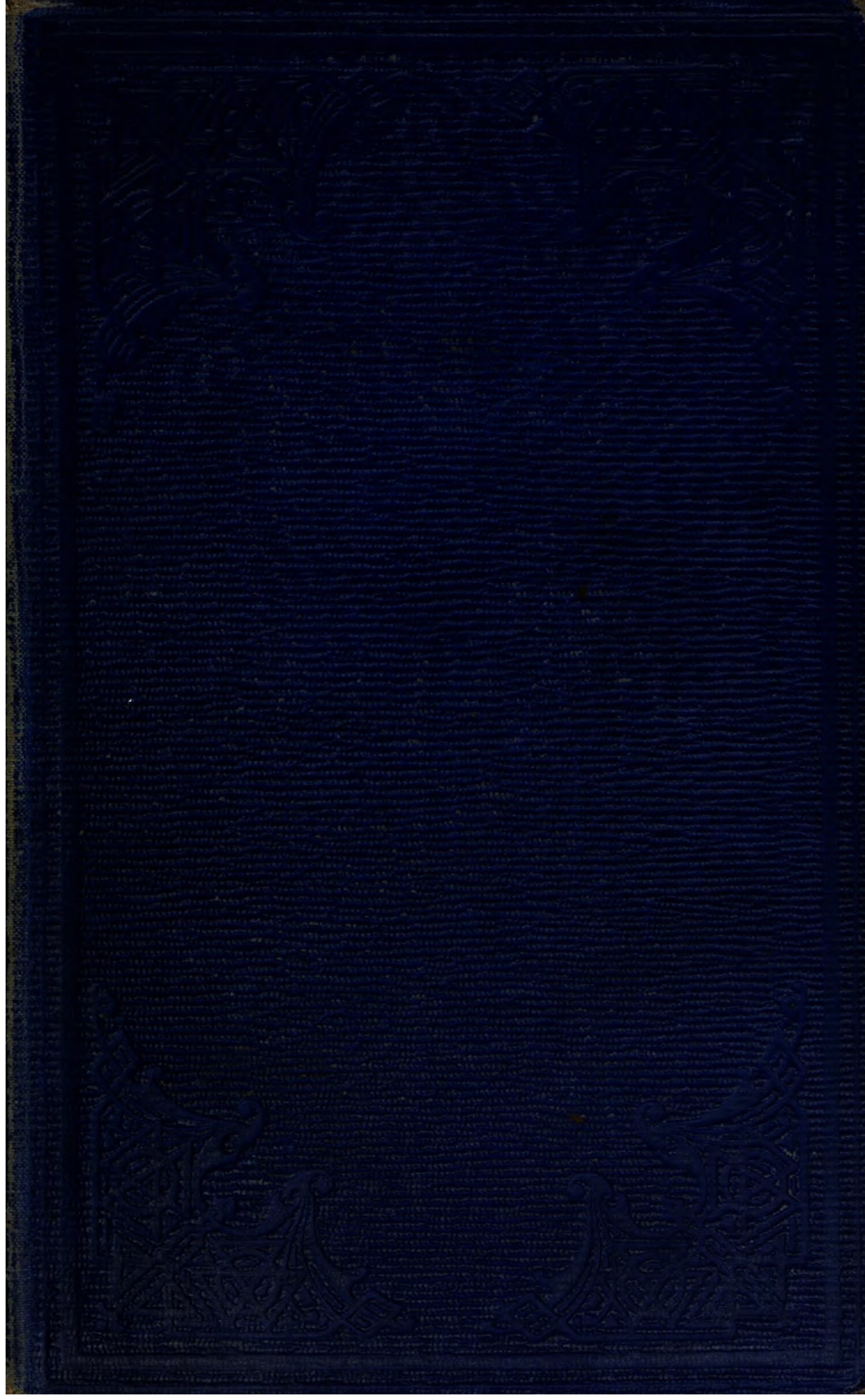
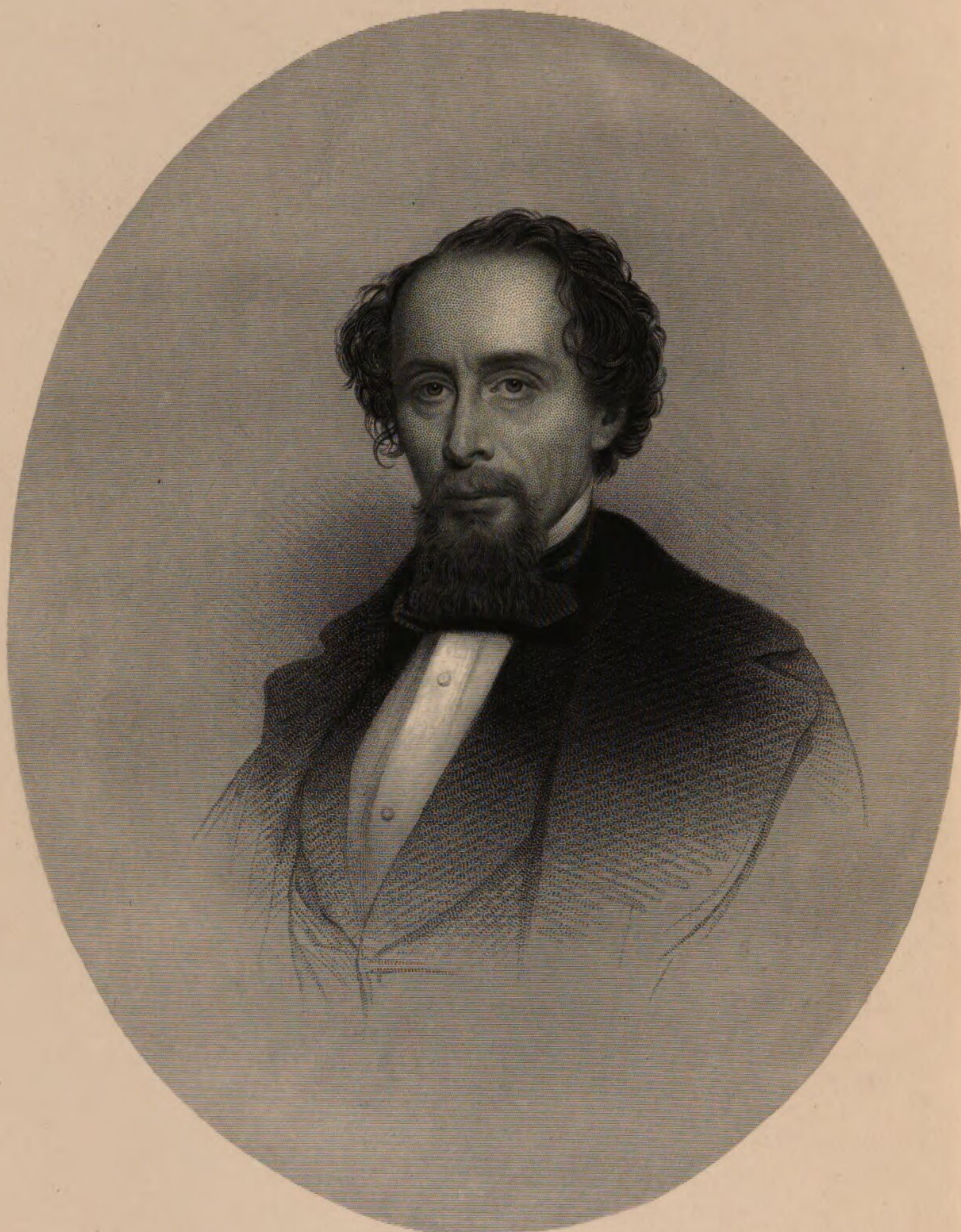




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J. H. BAKER, SC.

CHARLES DICKENS.

London, Hurst & Blackett, 1858.

NOVELS AND NOVELISTS,

FROM

ELIZABETH TO VICTORIA

J. CORDELL JEFFERSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

WEBB AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET,

1858.

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BY

J. CORDY JEAFFRESON.

AUTHOR OF "CREWE RISE,"

&c. &c.

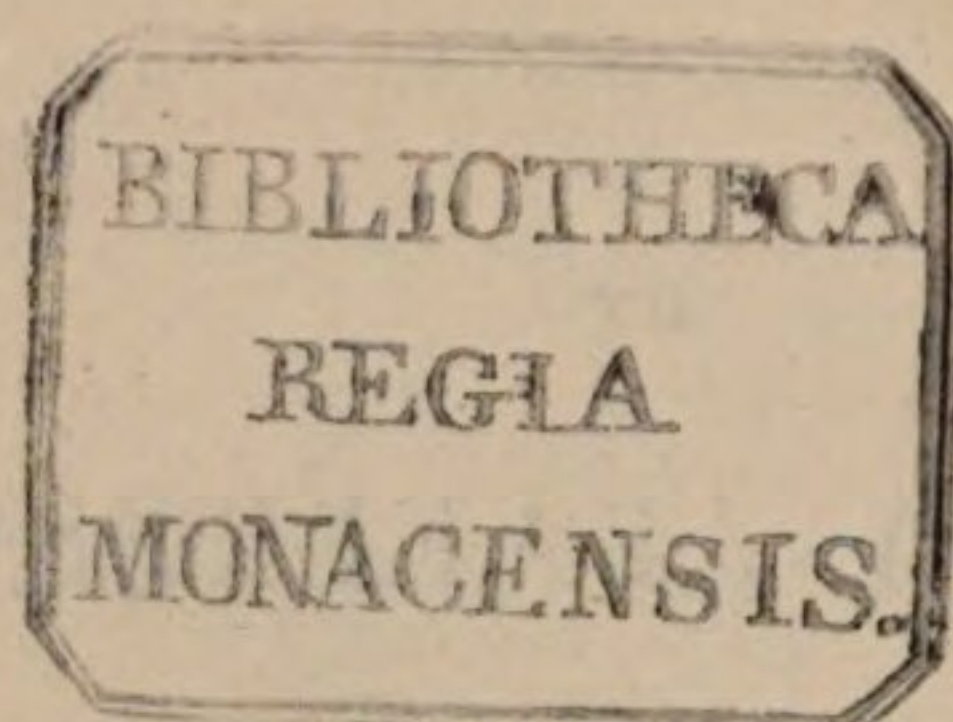
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NOVELS AND NOVELISTS.

CHAPTER I.

ANN RADCLIFFE.

ALTHOUGH Ann Radcliffe's parents were in rank no higher than respectable tradespeople, she was more than decently descended. Her paternal grandmother was a sister of Cheselden, the distinguished surgeon; her maternal grandmother was Anne Oates, a sister of Dr. Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard Jebb; and she was lineally descended from a De Witt, a near relative of John and Cornelius, who came over from Holland to carry out a government plan to drain the fens of Lincolnshire; a design which the popular rising and the execution of Charles the First expelled from the minds of its projectors.

Like many, and perhaps we may add *the best* of our female writers, Mrs. Radcliffe passed a retired life, which, apart from its literary results, affords few points of interest to the biographer. Her maiden name was Ward, and she was born in London on the 9th of July, 1764. Gifted with unusual beauty, the chief constituents of which were an exquisitely proportioned figure, a transparent complexion, and such bewitching lips and eyes as rarely fall to the lot of a girl, she was soon surrounded with admirers. At an early age she was introduced into much desirable society; and at the house of her especially kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bentley (Wedgewood and Bentley), at Turnham Green, she made the acquaintance of Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Piozzi.

When she was only three-and-twenty, the lovely creature gave her heart and hand to a Mr. William Radcliffe. This fortunate gentleman was a graduate of Oxford, a law student, and a man of considerable literary abilities. Upon his marriage, deeming it prudent to exercise his talents in some way that should reward his exertions with immediate payment, he relinquished his legal pursuits, and devoting his time and powers to journalism, eventually became the proprietor and editor of the "English Chronicle."

Two years after her marriage Mrs. Radcliffe made her first appearance as a novelist, with "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne." This romance, which was published 1789, when she was only twenty-five years old, was not either as a work of art, or a *commercial transaction*, more successful than first attempts usually are.

In 1790, however, she showed the world that she had "caught the knack;" for in that year appeared "the Sicilian Romance," which quickly became the favorite of the public, and convinced even the most crotchety critics that she was an authoress of very unusual powers.

Now that she had made a success, Mrs. Radcliffe determined wisely to keep her name before her admirers. In 1791, she published "The Romance of the Forest." In 1793, she visited Germany, paying especial attention to the scenery of the Rhine, and in the course of the same year she made a trip to the Westmoreland lakes. In the following year (1794) she published her excellent "Journey through Holland, the Western Frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine: To which are added Observations during a tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, &c.," and in the same year appeared "The Mysteries of Udolpho," for which she was paid £500—a sum then regarded as a very high one for a novel. In 1797 she published her last, and in the opinion of many her best, fiction—"The Italian"—for which she was paid by a publisher the yet greater amount of £800.

Although Mrs. Radcliffe lived for more than a quarter of a century after the publication of "The Italian," she never again gave the world a romance. It is asserted that she was displeased at having called into existence that host of miserable imitators which afflicted the patrons of circulating libraries with monstrous stories, of which "the horrors" and marvels were even more flat than the awkward diction in which they were presented to the reader, and that in disgust at having indirectly given birth to a vitiated literature, she resolved never again to touch a pen. But most likely this story is not more worthy of credit than the thousand and one others which were current in society about the famous authoress. Leading a life of domestic seclusion, and especially avoiding those circles where rank loftily patronizes literary celebrity, and mock genius fawns slavishly on fashion, circles into which a paltry vanity too often allures the best authors, Mrs. Radcliffe was utterly unknown to the thousands of English who, in London and in the country, were burning to learn something about her. At last, *society*, tired of being kept in such an ignominious state of ignorance, determined no longer to acknowledge herself unacquainted with the person, history, and circumstances of Mrs. Radcliffe, but to borrow from imagination the facts which that lady was so impertinent as to keep to herself. The consequence was that soon every coterie in London had its own absurd story about the authoress of "The Mysteries of Udolpho." At one time it was generally believed that the awful creations of her imagination haunted her incessantly, and that she was subject to distressing fits of gloom. The requisite improvements to this story were soon made, and it was stated that at length Mrs. Radcliffe's reason had given way, and that she was a maniac under confinement in one of the metropolitan asylums. And this picture being as painful, even disgusting, as one as it is well possible to conceive, society in spite of innumerable contradictions

cherished it, and clung to it, and extracted from it the most exquisite delight.

During the last twelve years of her life Mrs. Radcliffe was a terrible sufferer under that very painful disease, spasmodic asthma. On the 9th of January, 1822, her complaint displayed itself in a most threatening form, and she died on the following 7th of February, at her house in London.

It has been the fashion of late years to speak of Mrs. Radcliffe with contempt, and to point to her works as the best possible representatives of stupidity. This unjust scorn to a great extent is a result of the excellence of her works, which are still remembered and read, while the productions of nearly all her contemporaries are forgotten. Novel readers of the present generation, on turning to Mrs. Radcliffe's fictions, find them prolix, improbable, and wearisome, and 'speaking as they find' they utter their emphatic condemnation of her claims to respect. It would be well, if instead of indulging in hasty judgment, such censors compared critically Mrs. Radcliffe with novelists of her own time, and of the generations before. If they would have the patience to do so they would, supposing them to be endowed with ordinary sagacity, discover that the condemned authoress introduced a new element into fictitious literature perfectly distinct from the growls and groans and ridiculous horrors with which her name is associated in the popular mind. She was the first to adorn the 'English Novel' with what has ever since her time been regarded as necessary to a fiction of any pretensions to excellence,—*truthful, graphic, attractive description of scenery!* Read the following passage.

"Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, and exhibited the Appenines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over

each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountain she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gloom the summits of the forests that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below."

In what fiction published before Mrs. Radcliffe's time, is there such a piece of description as the above? And who cannot recognise her peculiar touches of the brush in almost all the best novels of a subsequent date—in Scott's, Bulwer's, and James's?

Although Mrs. Radcliffe liberally employed what may be called "supernatural effects" in the construction of her romantic novels, she was original in her way of using them. Like Miss Reeve she felt that society would not endure the free and unfettered introduction of the materials of the old romance, and that the charge of extravagance and impossibility ought to be avoided even in the treatment of the extravagant and impossible. But not contented with keeping herself within the limits of sub-supernaturalism, she introduced the plan of explaining away at the conclusion of the story all the marvels of the early chapters, and showing how all the miracles proceeded from simple and natural causes.

In 1834, Mrs. Radcliffe's poems were collected for the first time and published in two volumes 8vo. As a poetess she merits no praise, and much censure. Constrained and stilted immediately she tried to express herself in verse, she forms as remarkable an instance of a powerful and facile prose author (a most *rythmical* one, too) being unable to

compose a simple stanza, as Burns does of an unaffected and pathetic poet unable to write prose without immediately being guilty of affectation and pomposity. Perhaps Mrs. Radcliffe's least objectionable poem is that entitled "To the Nightingale," but in it she merely "echoes the conceit," made popular by Milton, and condemned by Coleridge, of the song of Philomel being melancholy.

CHAPTER II.

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

THE story of the greater and more eventful portion of Miss Edgeworth's life is told in the "Memoirs" of her father, begun by himself and concluded by her, a biography crammed with lively social sketches and valuable anecdotes, which it would be well for some publisher to put before the public in a cheap edition.

The Edgeworth family is an old one, having been originally established at Edgware, Middlesex, and giving a name to or receiving one from that place. The stock was transplanted from England to Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, when Edward and Francis (sons of Roger Edgeworth, a monk, who like his Master Henry the Eighth first wrote against the reformers, and then influenced by feminine charms exerted his abilities in pleading for them), under the patronage of Essex and Cecil emigrated to the emerald island.

The chronicles of the house of Edgeworth are amusing beyond description, so full are they of romantic occurrences and eccentric actions. Jane Edgeworth, the daughter of Sir Edmond Tuite, Knight of Sonna, Westmeath, wanted her husband to take out a baronet's patent, so that as "Lady Edgeworth" she might take place at church over some lady she deemed her inferior; her churlish husband refused to pay a large sum of money for so excellent a purpose, and, on her arguing and declaring she would never again go to church, told her she might stay at home or go wherever she pleased. The lady interpreted her lord's words literally, went off to Henrietta Maria in France, and

remained in attendance on that Queen till her Majesty's death. Another Edgeworth, a captain, who was a boon companion of Charles the Second, and was knighted by that merriest, or rather most riotous, of sots, rendered himself illustrious by foolish extravagance with money. To furnish means for his pleasures in London, he raised a sum by mortgage on one of his estates, and kept the cash (till it was squandered) in a stocking at the top of his bed, he and his lady dipping their hands into the long purse without consulting each other. He was a well-looking fellow and passionately fond of dress, and positively, being without funds in his pocket, sold the ground plot of a house in Dublin for a high-crowned hat and feathers. Yet this man died rich ; with years came prudence ; he pushed his interest at court, held several lucrative posts, and on quitting the world left each of his eight sons a comfortable landed estate, and his widow a large jointure. The eldest son of this Sir John, Colonel Francis Edgeworth, was a wit, and a gambler. One night at a party he lost at play all the money he could command, and then going to his wife, who was with the ladies in an adjoining room, asked her for her ear-rings to stake. Like a good wife she lent them, and such fortune accompanied them, that he won back all he had lost. In gratitude to his wife he promised her with an oath never again to play with cards or dice. He doubtless intended to keep his word, for shortly afterwards he was found with a friend in the hay-yard, the two amusing themselves with drawing straws out of a rick, and betting on which should draw the longest. Now in possession of a coach and four, and now with scarce a wheelbarrow, this fine Irish gentleman "of the old school" tasted the extremes of coarse luxury and privation. He left his affairs in such disorder that his son well nigh lost all his estate, or rather failed to find it ; but the counsels of a good guardian and some successful lawsuits eventually made him a

wealthy heir. One of these suits was rendered notable by the detection of a fraud. A witness, aged and of venerable aspect, was brought into court as the witness of a certain deed, the genuineness of which was disputed. The old man stated he had been a retainer of the Edgeworth family, and had been accustomed to transcribe papers for the gentleman who had executed the deed in question; and that foreseeing a dispute would arise and the deed be declared a forgery, he had put a sixpence under the seal, which would appear on the wax being broken. It was broken, and a sixpence was discovered, but it was dated five years subsequent to the date of the deed. This incident, it will be remembered, Miss Edgeworth made use of in one of her very best novels.

The winner of this suit married in 1732, Jane Lovell, a daughter of Sir Samuel Lovell, a Welsh Judge, a son of that Sir Salathiel Lovell, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, who, as Recorder of London, made himself conspicuous at the trial of the seven bishops. Sir Salathiel lived till he was ninety-four years of age, and so far lost his memory that instead of *recorder* he was called the *obliviscor* of London. "Sir," said a pert young barrister pleading before him, "you have forgotten the law." "Young man," was the reply, "I have forgotten more law than you will ever remember." An equally good story is told of Samuel Lovell, the Welsh Judge. Travelling on circuit near Beaumorris, his coach was overtaken by the tide, and set fast in the sand. Higher and higher came the water, but the judge sat without moving. His registrar crept out of the coach through one of the windows to the driver's seat, two other attendants quitted the interior of the vehicle through the same or a similar aperture and clambered to the roof-top. But still the judge remained in stolid dignity with the water creeping higher and higher round his legs. His companions implored him to come out, and follow their advice and example. "I will follow," replied the lawyer,

“if you can quote any precedent for a judge’s mounting a coach box.”

But to return to the Edgeworths. The son of the last mentioned Richard Edgeworth (winner of *the* suit and Miss Lovell), died in his seventieth year, in 1769, and was succeeded in the family estate of Edgeworthstown, by his son, Richard Lovell Edgeworth. This gentleman was a man remarkable for considerable intellect, goodness of disposition, and eccentricities, as well as excellences of character. He was first sent to Trinity College, Dublin, for an education, and then to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Before he was twenty, however, he ran away with a young lady without fortune, to Gretna Green, and married her. Ere he died, he knew something about matrimony, for he was married, like Fielding’s father, *four* times, his third wife being the sister of his second, and he had twenty-one children. In early life he was a man of fashion; his concluding years were spent in zealous exertions for the benefit of his tenantry, and poorer neighbours—in improving the system of agriculture, reclaiming waste land, and devising schemes for the education of the poor. He wrote on mechanical inventions, and on professional education, and, with his daughter Maria, produced an “Essay on Irish Bulls,” and a work of considerable merit on the education of children. Many persons, doubtless, will not feel much deference for his opinion on such a subject, on learning that he educated his son on the plan proposed in Rousseau’s *Emile*. “I dressed my son,” the father wrote, “without stockings, with his arms bare, in a jacket and trousers such as are quite common at present, but which were at that time novel and extraordinary. I succeeded in making him remarkably hardy; I also succeeded in making him fearless of danger, and, what is more difficult, capable of bearing privation of every sort. He had all the virtues of a child bred in the hut of a savage, and all the knowledge of *things*, which could

well be acquired at an early age, by a boy bred in civilized society." But if he had all the virtues of a savage, he was also possessed of the vices of one. He was a very selfwilled, hot-tempered, and dogged little rascal, and was in due course sent to sea, because he was fit for nothing else. He died at the early age of thirty-one years, in 1796, his father following him to the land of shades, on 13th of June, 1817.

Of the family of twenty-one, Maria Edgeworth was the second child, and eldest daughter. She was born on the 1st of January, 1767, and died in her 83rd year, on the 21st of May, 1849. Her independent literary career began with the present century. In 1800 appeared "Castle Rackrent," an Hibernian tale, taken from facts, and from the manners of the Irish Squires, before the year 1783. In 1801 appeared "The Moral Tales," and in 1804, were published three volumes of "Popular Tales." To enumerate all her works would be difficult and tedious. The most important of them are—"The Absentee," "Ennui," "Manceuvring," "Almeria," "Vivian," and the other tales of fashionable life; "Belinda," "Leonora," "Patronage," "Harrington," and "Ormond." And we must take care so as not to be asked why we except from the list of her more important works, her childrens' stories, such as "Rosamond and Frank," "Little Dog Trusty," and "The Cherry Orchard."

It is always difficult to state the limits of a successful author's influence, for when intellect appeals to, and rouses intellect, it is impossible to trace the effect of the original thought, giving a new impulse to, and taking a new color from every mind it strikes against. But, in Miss Edgeworth's case, there are circumstances that assure us we cannot easily over-estimate the consequences of her writings. She directed her abilities to the field of fictitious literature, when it was perhaps in a more unhealthy state than it had ever

been since it had ceased to offend with obscenity. The paltry absurdities that had for long done service as "Incidents," and "mysteries," in novels; "the swarms of peers, foundlings, and seducers," she declined to re-use for the thousandth time. The traditionary villain, the traditionary victim of heartless debauchery, and all other traditionary characters and things, Miss Edgeworth determined to have nothing to do with, albeit they were from good and true originals of the best masters—only taken from copies of copies, that had been copied at hundredth hand. All the dusty stage properties, and all the rubbish and lumber that had accumulated during years, she discarded, and with new materials, the living human manners and interests she beheld around her, and by the guidance of her warm affections and clear sound intelligence, she resolved to make a new start. She was not highly imaginative, but she had poetic *feeling*, and earnestness, and a fund of healthy satire at her command. She took the world as she found it, perhaps from a somewhat too prosaic point of view, and in tales she tried to inculcate sentiments and principles suited to its inhabitants. That she was not hard, or cold, or forbidding, the tenderness and benevolence of her truthful descriptions declare; but perhaps it may be charged against her, that she had not a sufficiently exalted ideal, that she sought and admired the useful and expedient, rather than the beautiful and noble. Sir James Mackintosh at first enthusiastically extolled her writings, because they were useful, illustrating and enforcing the exercise of all the minor virtues, of which prudence is the parent. But in time he modified his opinion, and said that her excellence as a moralist, and a woman of genius, consisted in her scientific and powerful treatment of a class of virtues most difficult to handle—not *most* beneficial in themselves. Any how she performed her task in such a style, that she struck home to the hearts of all people sufficiently educated to be able to read her. Sir

Walter Scott the *novelist* may be regarded as the immediate offspring of her genius. It was in consequence of the deep impression made on him by the simple pathos and truth of her delineations of Irish character, that he determined to do the like for his own Scotland. In the composition of "Waverley," she was the model he set before his eyes, and while reading the chapters, as the work progressed, James Ballantyne found he most gratified the author, when he said, "Positively this is equal to Miss Edgeworth;" and when "Waverley" was published, Scott showed his gratitude to his instructress, by causing a copy to be sent to her, from "the author of Waverley," and though he kept *in the letter* the secret of the authorship, he permitted it *in truth* to be revealed to her. With all his failings of vanity, Scott was far above the pettiness of disliking to acknowledge the benefits he derived from the works of his contemporaries.

In private life Miss Edgeworth was not less charming and beloved, than she was as a writer. The glimpses obtained of her life at Edgeworthstown at two different periods, in Lockhart's account of Sir Walter Scott's visit to her in Ireland, and Mr. and Mrs. Hall's "Ireland," make us feel as though we were personally known to her, and were individually indebted to her for that healthy freshness of thought, and serene cheerfulness she diffused around her domestic circle. In 1823, Sir Walter wrote of her, "she is full of fun and spirit; a little slight figure, very active in her motions, very good humoured, and full of enthusiasm." Again, in the same year, he wrote, "It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person, than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded the expectations which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naiveté*, and good-humoured ardour of mind, which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation. In external appearance she was quite the fairy of our

nursery tale—the *Whippity Stowrie*, if you remember such a sprite, who came flying through the windows to work all sorts of marvels.” And Byron, though in his journal he sneered at Mr. Edgeworth as a fine old fellow of a clarety, elderly, red complexion, and as a boisterous, vehement self-opiniated man, much disliked in London, altered his tone when speaking of her—though she didn’t make love to him. “The fact was, everybody cared more about *her*. She was a nice little unassuming ‘Jeannie Deans looking body,’ as we Scotch say; and, if not handsome, certainly not ill-looking. Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write *her name*; whereas her father talked, *not* as if he could write nothing else, but as if nothing else was worth writing.”

CHAPTER III.

AMELIA OPIE.

It is only the other day that Amelia Opie left us, but she began her course in a time that few who are alive can remember, and was the friend of many celebrated men and women, who have long since committed their reputations to history or "tradition's simple tongue." She commenced life a brilliant wilful worldling, and ended it a demure Quakeress; as a girl she was the darling pet of revolutionary writers and extreme sceptics, and in her calm autumn found her chief excitement in religious meetings, and in keeping a journal of spiritual experiences. Still there was a singular unity in her career; from first to last she was a coquette, a buoyant hearted, mischief loving, but most amiable coquette; not less so at seventy years of age in the prim costume of her sect, than in girlhood when her vanity delighted in small bonnets, blue robes, satin slips, worked cambric gowns with flounces, and feathers flat and curled. She tasted love at sixteen—the date of her last attachment who shall tell?

She was born in Norwich, on the 12th of November, 1769, being the only child of Dr. James Alderson, the leading physician of that city, and a grand-daughter of the Rev. Mr. Alderson of Lowestoft, Suffolk. She was also first cousin of the late Sir E. H. Alderson, the much respected judge. On her mother's side she was of good extraction, for that lady's name was Briggs. The comical adventures of a member of this family, who is one of Mr. Punch's intimate friends, render it difficult for us to associate ideas of feudal dignity with the name; but not the less was Briggs the appellation of "an ancient and honourable family of Salle, in

Norfolk, who before the reign of Edward the First assumed the surname of De Ponte or Pontibus, i.e. at Brigge or Briggess; as the ancient family of Fountaines residing at the same place assumed theirs of De Fonte or Fontibus, much about the same time, one we presume dwelling by the bridge or bridges, the other by the springs or fountains' heads."

At an early period Amelia Opie lost her mother, and at an age when most children are still in the nursery she was made to preside at her father's table, and be the mistress of his house. Norwich was then the centre of a brilliant and highly intellectual society, the barristers of the Norfolk circuit so highly esteeming its beautiful women, and gifted men, that they looked forward to their periodical visits to it with no ordinary pleasure. It was very gay, and very republican; it was the hot-bed of balls, card parties, and revolutionary clubs; and at no house in the city was there better dancing, or better whist playing, or more favour to liberal politics than at Dr. Alderson's. The genial physician's only daughter too added not slightly to the attractions of his establishment; she was a bewitching, ravishing little beauty, with auburn hair, soft laughing eyes, petite figure, delicate features, lucid complexion, tiny hands and arms, a thousand winning affectations, a merry heart, and a mischievous tongue. Her accomplishments would be esteemed considerable even in these days; for she was a tolerable linguist, a clever artist for a young lady, and she wrote tender and pathetic ballads, which she sung with the most exquisite feeling. She was admired, adored; and like a foolish girl formed an imprudent attachment which, like a wise one, she laid aside at the bidding of her friends. When Gibbon was ordered by his father to dismiss from his thoughts all sentimental care for the noble girl who won the poor prize of his cold affections, "after a painful struggle he yielded to his fate; *he sighed as a lover, he obeyed as a son*; his wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the

habits of a new life." In a somewhat similar style of heartless propriety Mrs. Opie has versified the story of her dawn of passion.

But once, I confess ('twas at tender sixteen),
Love's agents were busy indeed round my heart,
And naught but good fortune's assistance I ween,
Could e're from my bosom have warded the dart.

Having been thus climatized Miss Alderson prepared to carry out vigorously, and to a profitable conclusion, her social campaign. For years she kept the field; but though multitudes of lovers sighed, none of "the right ones" made offers, and year by year passed on without Miss Alderson being engaged, till neighbours began to display in their speeches a little of that charitable sympathy we most of us keep a store of for our very peculiar friends.

In 1794, she went to London, and was present at the famous trials of Hardy, Horne Tooke, and Thelwall, and heard Erskine in the Old Bailey mutter with terrible significance into the ear of the trembling Lord Chief Baron Eyre, "My lord, I am willing to give your lordship such an answer as an aggrieved man of honour like myself is willing to give to the man who has repeatedly insulted him, and I am willing and ready to meet your lordship, at any time and place that you may choose to appoint." Imagine this now-a-days! What would follow if Mr. Edwin James, Q.C., were to notify to his lordship on the bench, that it would give him the greatest possible pleasure to shoot him through the head, or run him through the body? These trials were a most agreeable source of excitement to Miss Alderson, for she was republican to the back-bone, sympathized with the French revolutionists, hated tyrants, preferred unitarianism to the rusty orthodoxy of the church of England, and meditated a flight from her native land to America with her father and a few friends, if "the accused" were not acquitted, and Britain became a home only fit for slaves! She formed the

acquaintance of some celebrities too during this visit, and renewed her interest in several famous people she had previously been made known to. She called in Marlborough Street on Mrs. Inchbald, who had just received £200 from Sheridan for a farce of only sixty pages; she saw the lovely Siddons, handsome and charming as ever, suckling her little baby; she found good Mrs. Barbauld as delightful as ever, and formed a friendship with Mary Wollstonecraft, still retaining and clinging to her dishonoured name of Imlay; and she was introduced to Godwin at Somers Town. The philosopher was found dressed in a green coat and crimson under waistcoat, in new, sharp-toed, red morocco slippers, and with his hair *bien poudré*.

In 1797, she made another visit to London, and added to the number of her acquaintance. Holcroft fell in love with her, and it was reported that Godwin had met with the same accident, but that could hardly be the case, for the moralist had just cemented with the marriage ceremony his extraordinary connection with Mary Wollstonecraft. That lady sent her young Norwich friend a characteristic letter, wherein she unfolded some of her views on conjugal life. "It is my wish that Mr. Godwin should visit and dine out as formerly, and I shall do the same; in short, I still mean to be independent, even to the cultivating sentiments and principles in my children's minds, (should I have more), which he disavows. The wound my unsuspecting heart formerly received is not healed. I found my evenings solitary, and I wished, while fulfilling the duty of a mother, to have some person with similar pursuits bound to me by affection, and beside, I earnestly desired to resign a name which seemed to disgrace me."

But this year was an eventful one. Opie the artist saw Miss Alderson in London, at an evening party, and fell in love with her at first sight. She arrived late, after all the other guests had assembled, and ran into the room in a *blue*

dress, made low, so as to leave the neck and arms bare, and with *a tiny bonnet* on her head, worn sideways, and surmounted by three white feathers. This vision of loveliness led poor Opie a captive. He made his offer almost on the spot, and was refused half-a-dozen times in as many weeks. Most probably the lady took care that her "no" should mean "yes, by and bye," or "yes, if I can get nothing better." But many considerations caused her to hesitate. The hero of the scene was in his 36th year, and ladies, though they have a weakness for old lovers, have a preference for young husbands; he was the son of a poor carpenter!—not by any means an agreeable thing to say of one's accepted in "the genteel circle" of a provincial city; he had been married before to a lady neither virtuous nor beautiful, from whom he had obtained a divorce,—bah, what a story for Norwich! Lastly, he was *only* a painter,—and it was beyond dispute that an artist could not be a gentleman; he might make a fortune, be knighted, and blazon the seasons or any other queer device on the panels of his carriage, but still he was only "that fellow the painter."—The following story apart from its exquisite humour speaks volumes on this point. At a dinner at Sir William Elford's, where the party consisted of the host, Colonel Elford, Mr. Opie, Mr. Northcote, and Sir Francis Bourgeois, (the landscape painter), Opie and Northcote fell into a very warm and too vehemently expressed argument. "Painters," whispered Colonel Elford to Sir Francis, not knowing he addressed an artist, "are queer fellows; how oddly they converse. One knows not what to make of them; how oddly these men run on." Sir Francis assented like a well-bred man without mentioning his profession, but at tea he took an opportunity of telling the story to Northcote in an under tone. "Gude God!" exclaimed that queer little fellow with an expression of the deepest astonishment, "*then he took you for a gentleman.*"

To her intimate friend, Mrs. Taylor, Miss Alderson

wrote at this time with candour. She was ambitious of being a wife and mother, she was well inclined to be Mrs. Opie, but she trembled at what Mrs. Grundy would say. "I could almost resolve," she acknowledged, "to break all fetters, and relinquish too the wide, and often aristocratic circle, in which I now move, and become the wife of a man whose genius has raised him from obscurity into fame and comparative affluence; but indeed my mind is on the pinnacle of its health when I thus feel; and on a pinnacle one can't remain long." At length she came to the wise determination of accepting the frequently repeated offer. She went home to Norwich, took leave of the friends of her girlhood, returned once more to London to the house of an old friend, and was married in Mary-le-bone Church on the 8th of May 1798.

Before her marriage Mrs. Opie had made some steps in authorship by the anonymous publication of several popular songs and stanzas, and of a novel on a subject she was well qualified to give an opinion on, entitled "The Dangers of Coquetry"—a work that did not meet with any very decided success. But it was after her marriage that she applied herself with assiduity to literature, and took courage to proclaim herself an author. In 1801 she published the "Father and Daughter," which simple moral tale was accompanied by a poem called "The Maid of Corinth." In 1802 she gave the world a volume of poems, which the "Edinburgh Review" spoke of with qualified praise, and which contained the lines so warmly commended by Sidney Smith in one of his "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," delivered at the Royal Institution in 1804-5.

Go, youth beloved, in distant glades,
New friends, new hopes, new joys to find!
Yet sometimes deign, 'midst fairer maids,
To think of her thou leav'st behind.
Thy love, thy fate, dear youth, to share,
Must never be my happy lot:

But thou may'st grant this humble prayer—
Forget me not ! forget me not !

Yet should the thought of my distress
Too painful to thy feelings be,
Heed not the wish I now express
Nor ever deign to think of me !
But oh ; if grief thy steps attend,
If want, if sickness be thy lot,
And thou require a soothing friend,
Forget me not ! forget me not !

In 1804, appeared "Adeline Mowbray ; or, Mother and Daughter," a novel in three volumes. And in 1806 were published the "Simple Tales," in four volumes.

Such were her chief literary productions during her brief period of married life. Short as that period was it was long in love ; and from the beginning to the end of it she had the proud enjoyment of surrounding her husband's existence with a grace and a happiness which had never before approached it. To increase his income, in order to meet the augmented expenditure of a married man, he devoted more of his time to portrait-painting, and especially to perfecting his likenesses of ladies. At the second exhibition after his wedding, his friends congratulated him on the excellence of his female portraits, saying, "we never saw anything like this in you before, Opie ; this must be owing to your wife." And she was simple enough, and woman enough to be so pleased with the compliment as to chronicle it ; though what girl is there who on becoming engaged is not assured that her chosen one sings, or sketches, or writes, or plays the flute with a spirituality altogether new to him ? But an important service that she unquestionably rendered him was the making his home cheerful to himself, and attractive to his friends. He was intensely happy ; and if the calm of matrimonial felicity was ever broken, it was because he was so pleased with his home that he wished always to be in it, while she wanted

the excitement of rather too many parties and excursions to the theatres.

In the August of 1802, the happy couple went to Paris, and saw the rare wonders of that capital, the *chefs d'œuvre* of art in the Louvre, and the great first consul. Did not Madame d'Arblay do the same? They lodged in the Hotel of the Rue des Etrangers, between the Madeleine, and the Place de la Concorde, with its "perpetual guillotine." They walked about the Louvre with Charles James Fox, who invited them to dinner in the Rue Richelieu, and treated them with urbanity that scarcely savoured of condescension. She saw Buonaparte review some troops in the Place du Carousel, surrounded by a staff of dazzling brilliance, he himself sitting on his horse pale and thin, with "his simple hat adorned with nothing but a little tri-coloured cockade, and his blue coat, guiltless of a gold embroidery." They were taken to the hotel of the First Consul's Mother, and conversed with the Archbishop of Lyons, a beau-ecclesiastic, ere long to be known as Cardinal Fesch. They heard Talma as Cain in the "Death of Abel." And at an evening reception by a lady of rank, Mrs. Opie flirted with the Turkish Ambassador, and Kosciusko who, with a vanity not exactly pleasing in so grand a patriot, asked the poetess to write some verses upon him.

But soon the well-assorted couple were to be disunited; and the separation was to be effected just as the artist had tided over a term of adversity and neglect, and was once again borne onwards triumphantly by popular favour. On the 9th of April, 1807, he expired in the 46th year of his age, and on the 20th was interred close by the side of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Mrs. Opie, now a widow just upon thirty-eight years of age, quitted London where she had become a personage of distinction, and returning to Norwich once more became the mistress of her father's house. Continually, however, she

visited the metropolis, keeping in with "the sets" presided over by Lady Charleville and Lady Cork. At one time we meet with her, on the evening of the day after the removal of Sir F. Burdett to the Tower, at a dinner party at Lady Elizabeth Whitbread's, when at a later hour of the evening she gossips with Sheridan and laughs merrily with Sidney Smith. At another time she is at a *soirée*, given by Madame de Staël (in 1813), where Lady Crewe, Lord Dudley, William Spencer, the Mackintoshes, the Romillys, and such-like distinguished guests, are thrown into the shade by the presence of the King of the Netherlands.

In 1814, she was up in London, whisking from one rout to another, in the full whirl of dissipation caused by the reception of the Emperor of Russia, and King of Prussia. And so celebrated had she become, that the street in which she sojourned was blocked up with the carriages of those who came to call on her. "What's to be seen at No 11?" cried a coachman to her footman. "Only a lady," was the man's sardonic answer. "What, is she ill?" was the reply.

She saw her old friend Sidney Smith frequently; she talked craniology with Spurzheim, and moral philosophy with Dr. Brown; she posted off to the speeches at Harrow, dined with all kinds of grand folks, and forcing her way into the Pulteney Hotel, waited in the hall with ten other ladies till the Emperor of the Russias passed through to his apartments on his return from Carlton House. As soon as his Imperial Majesty entered, the ladies sprung forward, and *touched* him; Mrs. Opie was only able to catch hold of his *wrist*, and was very severe on the forwardness of those who touched his *hand*. It would require a chapter to enumerate all the interesting people she saw and had intercourse with. Mrs. Harvey, the novelist, James Smith, Monk Lewis, Horace Twiss, Lord Limerick, Miss White, Lady Caroline Lamb, Blucher, Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, Playfair, Richard Payne Knight, John William Ward, Baron Hum-

boldt, and a host of others. And did she not pay £4. 7s. for a ticket for the ball given to the Duke of Wellington? She wrote to her father—"I go full dressed, but no train, and high feathers; with a pink domino of calico, made high and long, to give me height and disguise me." And with all this gaiety and whirl of dissipation she contrived to find time for a little religious excitement, intercourse with grave friends, and some chapel-going. For, year by year, she gradually withdrew herself from the Unitarian connections of her early days, and more and more intimately united herself to that strong body of Friends, presided over by the Gurneys, which for years was so large an element in Norwich society.

In 1823, on the 7th of April, Dr. Alderson reached the advanced age of eighty, but 'ere he concluded his 83rd year he died; and his demise forms an important mark of boundary in Mrs. Opie's life.

In 1808, she published a second volume of poems, "The Warrior's Return, and other poems;" in 1809 she presented to the world her husband's "Lectures on Painting," precluded by a memoir of him by her pen; in 1812 she published "Temper," a novel; in 1813 appeared the "Tales of Real Life;" in 1816 she published "Valentine's Eve," in three volumes, a novel with a deep religious colouring; in 1818 were committed to the world her "Tales of the Heart;" and in 1822 she published her last novel, "Madeline."

Quakerism now perfectly took possession of her; her father's long illness and slow decay, and the decease of some of her intimate friends had the startling and morbidly powerful effect upon her, that the idea of death usually has on the frivolous, and those who have postponed for years the consideration of solemn subjects. She suddenly awoke to the fact that she was not destined to inhabit this world for ever; and with convulsive eagerness she hastened to prepare herself for another. She discontinued her visits to the theatre,

and went instead to "Bible Meetings," "Anti Slavery Meetings," all kinds of meetings. She avoided vain society, left off her favourite adornments of dress, courted the attention of grave and God-fearing men, and of course kept a journal of religious experiences, and spiritual wrestlings, which with unpardonable indelicacy has been published since her death. On the 11th of August, 1825, she was admitted to membership with the Society of Friends. With a sense of deep pain we read in her journal the notes of her diseased introspection for some time after this date. "A quiet night and very satisfactory morning meeting. Cough very troublesome. Now to bed, thankful for the mercies and favours of the day. The poor Duke of York! would I knew what his death-bed feelings and hopes were, and *on what grounded*." "Meeting, a mixed one of favoured and wandering thought: L. A. very sweet in her ministry." "Lost a great deal of time to-day *reading an old favourite*, displeased and shocked even, at my waste of time, and my life so far spent. God be merciful to me a sinner." "A night of cough, but of comfort." Such are the jottings down of this log-book. The *old favourite* was of course some play or work of fiction. Literature that did not savour of the cant of sectarianism had now become sinful. It was reported a new novel was about to proceed from her pen, and the rumour filled her with consternation. She wrote to Mrs. Fry contradicting it, in a letter commencing thus:

Norwich 12th mo., 6th, 1823.

My Very Dear Friend,

As it is very possible that thou mayst have been told that a new novel from my pen, called "*The Painter and his Wife*" is in the press, I wish to tell thee this is a falsehood; that my publishers advertised this only begun work, unknown to me, and that I have written to say the said work is not written, *nor ever will be*. I must own to thee, however, that as several hundreds of it are already ordered by the trade, I have *felt* the sacrifice, but I do not *repent* of it."

Her next work after "Madeline" was "Lying in all its Branches." In 1826 she published "Detraction Displayed." The year 1833, saw the birth of the "Lays for the Dead," a volume of lugubrious verse, having few, if any, of the merits of her early poetical effusions. So finishes the list of her contributions to literature. From the date of her conversion novels were to be censured and discountenanced; it was a good work to write *little* stories with a moral purpose, but wicked to compose long ones with the same object.

But it may not be supposed that Quakerism had expelled from her nature all its original leaven of worldliness, or that she passed the remainder of her days in pious seclusion. On the contrary, though now sixty years of age, she was continually on the move from one scene of excitement to another. As "a friend" she regularly attended the May meetings in London, and when in town for this seasonable enjoyment did not fail to renew her acquaintance with her old associates of Vanity Fair. In 1829 she again visited Paris, and partook of the pleasures of that gay capital with all the zest of former times, bearing her sober garb into brilliant saloons, and creating an immense sensation by her two-fold fame, as *femme d'esprit* and a *pieuse*. The Marquis de Clermont Tonnerredid his best to convert her to Roman Catholicism, expressing his earnest desire that one "si bonne et si dévouée aux bonnes œuvres" should be "entièrement Catholique." Indeed the Quaker's hat quite "hit" the Parisian taste. She visited the Duchess de Broglie, was the guest of de Lafayette in Paris and at his country residence, conversed with Benjamin Constant, half fainted in the Morgue, made her way to a *soirée* given by La Baronne Cuvier, had her portrait taken by David, and withal had frequent "meetings" with a few "friends" who chanced to be sojourning in the capital.

She returned to Norwich. But so fascinated was she by the attentions she had received on the banks of the Seine,

that at the close of the following year (1830), unable to control her excitement at the revolutionary news of the summer season, she hurried off again, crossed the channel, and on the 5th of the 11th month, was located in the Hôtel de Breteuil, Rue de Rivoli, very much disappointed at finding Paris so much as usual, and the Parisians not employed in killing each other. "But what," she wrote with evident mortification, "was become of the Revolution? Paris seemed as bright and peaceful as when I left it thirteen months ago!" But if bloodshed was scarce, pleasure was plentiful, and the traveller gratefully partook of that which was provided. Again she saw Lafayette, David, Humboldt, Cuvier, and Benjamin Constant. She made the acquaintance of Madame de Genlis, a really pretty old woman of eighty-seven, very unaffected, with nothing of smartness, or affected state or style about her. Ere she quitted Paris she saw that venerable lady buried. She visited St. Cloud, called on the Abbé Gregoire, and received to an interview Fenimore Cooper. One day she had a champagne dinner in the grand *salon* of Richard's, in the Palais Royal, and went to bed "delighted with her day." The next day was seriously spent, as her journal will show. "Went to Meeting, we had a comfortable sitting. Dined at the Champs Elysées; read aloud two letters from a pious book; after tea we fell into silence unexpectedly, and sat near an hour; a great comfort; pleased with my day." To such crowds of admirers had she to be introduced, that she was wearied outright with the formality of being made known to people; and yet she could not rest without learning everybody's name. A lion herself, she was a thorough lion-hunter. "How I wish, where it is not the custom to introduce, that everyone was ticketed." And she lived in circles where, under such an arrangement, every ticket would have been interesting. Her tide of honour was at its height, when she received from the Queen an invitation for the

next evening. 'She made it a rule not to go out on *first* evenings, but to see her majesty she would make an exception,' she replied to La Marquise de D. *dame d'honneur* de la Reine, who conveyed the invitation. And accordingly she went, and found the Queen and la Princess d'Orleans, with some *dames d'honneur*, and the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours, spending a quiet Sunday evening. Solemnity and sabbath calm pervaded the scene. The queen, with the graceful tact of a Frenchwoman, acted the rôle of a *pieuse*, talked gravely of good books, and working for the poor, and imperturbably assured her guest, that one of her favourite works of literature was the life of Mary Fletcher, the methodist, lately translated into the French.

Her visit was of several weeks duration, certainly twelve, and she did not seem at all inclined to bring it to a conclusion. But her good Norwich "friends" became alarmed; they feared that Amelia Opie's heart was again taken captive by the blandishments of princes, and the allurements of the world; and they wrote to her, urging her to return lest she should be "drawn away from the simplicity" of Christian faith and manners. Taking their exhortation with humility she returned to Norwich, and having (in 1832) sold her house in St. George's, in that city, made a prolonged sojourn amongst her husband's friends in Cornwall. On the 25th of the 6th mo., 1833, she returned to Norwich, and took possession of lodgings in St. Giles's. In 1834 she went to London, and proceeded to Edinburgh and Aberdeen—at which last city she attended a General Meeting of the Friends. In 1835 she again visited the continent, visiting Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, Namur, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Bonn, Coblenz, Mayence, Weisbaden, Zurich, Lucerne, and numerous other regulation spots for tourists to frequent. Everywhere she met with Quakers enjoying themselves, and everywhere she was hailed as a person of distinction. On a steamboat which she went on

board at Mayence, she was greeted by a royal lady, and she characteristically jotted down the interview in her journal. "We went down into the handsome cabin, but were most civilly requested to leave it, as it was engaged for the Princess of Saxony. We went on board again, and I soon forgot even my sorrow, in the lovely scenery around. On the deck I had a flattering *rencontre* with the Princess, who *attracted by my singular dress!!!* opened a conversation with me. At last she asked my name; and when I said Amelia Opie, 'Madame Opie,' she exclaimed, '*quoi, auteur célèbre,*' and then she was kinder still, had one of her own stools brought for me, and made me sit beside her." Can we not now see the dear old lady dodging about the boat, first down stairs, then on deck, taking good care that the Princess should at least *see* her "singular dress."

She never went again on the continent, but she was constantly quitting Norwich (where she kept her head quarters from this time till her death) for the sea-side and town. In London she was till the last petted as a curiosity. In 1840 she was at the great meeting of the Anti-Slavery convention; in 1841 she was again in London, dining with Sidney Smith at the Bishop of Durham's; flirting with O'Connell, whose magnificent person she admired even more than his eloquence; dining with Lord Brougham; visiting the Duke of Sussex; and writing "Every night this week I shall have dined out, and in parties of a most agreeable description." To the very last she was "game." In 1848 she went to Claremont and visited in adversity that Queen who had honoured her by calling her to her palace. In 1851 she visited Keswick, and on her return through London went to the "Great Exhibition." She was now more than eighty years old, and in consideration of her age and infirmities she was privileged to enter the palace, an hour before the time of general admission, and be wheeled about in her chair. In that world's fair she was greeted by innu-

merable friends, amongst whom was Miss Berry, also in a wheel-chair. "Where did you get your chair, Mrs. Opie? I quite envy it," exclaimed Miss Berry. "Shall we have a chair race?" was the response.

But the end of her brisk, happy, successful, and most amiable life was fast approaching. From that time her infirmities increased and her health diminished, till it was with gratitude not less than sorrow that the dear friends who watched by her side saw her breathe her last—murmuring "all is peace," "all is mercy."

Amelia Opie died at midnight, at her residence, "The Castle Meadow House," Norwich, on the 2nd of December, 1853.

She was taken from the chamber in which she expired, and placed lying in her coffin in a lower apartment, there to await removal to her grave, surrounded by the silent watchful portraits of many of her most celebrated and dearest friends. Lafayette, Cooper, David, Madame de Staël, John Joseph Gurney, Stanley Bishop of Norwich, the Bishop of Durham, Sedgwick, Whewell, Mrs. Siddons. Amongst those likenesses were the portraits of some who were still in their dreary possession of worldly dignity, and some who, like the inmate of that dark coffin, had disappeared from the fretful ways of men.

As a writer Mrs. Opie is pathetic and tender, subduing our feelings in spite of her carelessness, her clumsiness, and occasional silliness. She was by far the superior of her contemporary Madame d'Arblay; but in this day when Mrs. Norton, Miss Yonge, Miss Mulock, and Miss Sewell are alive, and actively using their pens, it cannot be advanced that she has not been immeasurably surpassed.

CHAPTER IV.

WALTER SCOTT.

IN the brief attempt at autobiography which the author of "Waverley" gave the world, and which is generally known as the Ashestiel Fragment, he says, with much good humour and good taste, "Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid."

In point of descent Scott had some right to boast, if, indeed, the accident of lineage can give such right, for he was descended from more than one distinguished house, having in his veins the blood of the Rutherfords and the Swintons of Swinton, and his own male ancestors, of the family of Harden, branched off from the great Buceleuchs, in the middle of the fourteenth century. But Sir Walter's *immediate* ancestors were sufficiently humble, his father being only a respectable attorney in Edinburgh, and his grandfather being a farmer and cattle-jobber, who began life with the small capital of £30, which he borrowed from an old shepherd named Hogg.

Lockhart, though well acquainted with the particulars of Scott's family, states with amusing pomposity that none of Scott's progenitors "had ever sunk below the situation and character of a gentleman." Now, we see no reason why a man may not be a true gentleman, and wear the livery of a running footman, as many a "gentle" did in the feudal times; but we must contend that if the term "*situation* of a gentleman" means anything, it cannot be applied to the

position of an agricultural dealer commencing trade with a borrowed capital of £30.

Walter Scott was born on the 15th August, 1771, in Edinburgh, in his father's house, at the head of the College Wynd. Mr. Scott (the father) had no less than twelve children, but of them the six eldest died in infancy, and of them all, none but Sir Walter and his favourite brother, Thomas Scott, left issue.

Walter's childhood was passed in sickness. When only eighteen months old, he was attacked with a fever, which deprived him of power over his right leg. For the sake of his health, the delicate child was sent out of Edinburgh to enjoy the pure air of Sandy-Knowe, the residence of his paternal grandfather, who had done well in trade on that £30; and after a prolonged residence there, he was taken by an aunt to Bath, where he resided for about a year. While at Sandy-Knowe, at this early period of sickness, he was subjected to a medical treatment which Larrey, in Napoleon's campaigns, found very useful in certain cases of suspended animation. As often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, the little urchin was stripped, and was wrapped up in the warm skin, just as it had been taken from the animal. Like most sickly children, he was very precocious, learning with rapidity and thinking much, and at six years of age he astonished those who conversed with him with his searching remarks, and his queer store of information.

It is the usual fate of such children to sink into death, but little Walter was destined to be a sturdy boy, and as hearty and athletic a young man as his family had ever produced. Neither at the High School, nor at the University of his ancient city, where he was educated, did he impress his academical superiors as being possessed of great talents. He was a high-spirited, courageous boy, always ready for mischief, always forward in a row, and popular with his

schoolfellows, but a lazy scholar. At the University he was annoyed at finding himself so much behind his old mates of the High School, but his vexation did not spur him to exertion—on the contrary, he tried to salve his wounded vanity by expressing an unmitigated contempt for Greek, and stubbornly refusing to learn that language. And so doggedly did he stick to this noble resolution, that he never acquired any acquaintance with the first of classic tongues. In 1830, having need to take from an authority of reference the words *ᾠδός* and *ποιητής*, for his “Introduction to Popular Poetry,” he positively dared not trust himself to insert the mysterious characters in his manuscript, but requested his son-in-law Lockhart to do it for him. He lived bitterly to repent his folly in neglecting to avail himself of those early educational advantages fortune had thrown in his way, and with affecting gravity he remarked in the *Ashestiel* Fragment, “If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages, let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.”

On the 31st of March, 1786, Walter Scott was apprenticed to his father, to learn the business of a writer to the signet. The old man intended his son for the bar, but wished him first to learn the habits and minutiae of legal business in the humbler walk of the profession. Walter in after life never lamented this step, for the accurate acquaintance he so gained of legal practice was a valuable possession to him. He was an industrious and painstaking articulated clerk, and spurred by the prospect of getting three-pence a page for pocket-money, he accomplished many a

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Walter's childhood was passed in sickness. When only eighteen months old, he was attacked with a fever, which deprived him of power over his right leg. For the sake of his health, the delicate child was sent out of Edinburgh to enjoy the pure air of Sandy-Knowe, the residence of his paternal grandfather, who had done well in trade on that £30; and after a prolonged residence there, he was taken by an aunt to Bath, where he resided for about a year. While at Sandy-Knowe, at this early period of sickness, he was subjected to a medical treatment which Larrey, in Napoleon's campaigns, found very useful in certain cases of suspended animation. As often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, the little urchin was stripped, and was wrapped up in the warm skin, just as it had been taken from the animal. Like most sickly children, he was very precocious, learning with rapidity and thinking much, and at six years of age he astonished those who conversed with him with his searching remarks, and his queer store of information.

It is the usual fate of such children to sink into death, but little Walter was destined to be a sturdy boy, and as hearty and athletic a young man as his family had ever produced. Neither at the High School, nor at the University of his ancient city, where he was educated, did he impress his academical superiors as being possessed of great talents. He was a high-spirited, courageous boy, always ready for mischief, always forward in a row, and popular with his

schoolfellows, but a lazy scholar. At the University he was annoyed at finding himself so much behind his old mates of the High School, but his vexation did not spur him to exertion—on the contrary, he tried to salve his wounded vanity by expressing an unmitigated contempt for Greek, and stubbornly refusing to learn that language. And so doggedly did he stick to this noble resolution, that he never acquired any acquaintance with the first of classic tongues. In 1830, having need to take from an authority of reference the words *ἀοιδός* and *ποιητής*, for his “Introduction to Popular Poetry,” he positively dared not trust himself to insert the mysterious characters in his manuscript, but requested his son-in-law Lockhart to do it for him. He lived bitterly to repent his folly in neglecting to avail himself of those early educational advantages fortune had thrown in his way, and with affecting gravity he remarked in the *Ashestiel* Fragment, “If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages, let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.”

On the 31st of March, 1786, Walter Scott was apprenticed to his father, to learn the business of a writer to the signet. The old man intended his son for the bar, but wished him first to learn the habits and minutiae of legal business in the humbler walk of the profession. Walter in after life never lamented this step, for the accurate acquaintance he so gained of legal practice was a valuable possession to him. He was an industrious and painstaking articulated clerk, and spurred by the prospect of getting three-pence a page for pocket-money, he accomplished many a

good feat at copying. On one occasion he wrote out one hundred and twenty pages, without stopping for refreshment or rest, and pocketed the reward of his toil, thirty shillings, with much satisfaction. During the course of his apprenticeship he attended his lectures at the University, and, a twelvemonth or more after its close, having passed the requisite examinations, he was advanced to the gown duties and dignity of barrister on the 11th of June, 1792.

A fine hearty specimen of a lad the youngster was in his student days and early manhood. With the exception of the lameness of that unfortunate leg which had suffered in childhood, he was comely and well-grown; had an honest, generous expression of face, that is far more precious than beauty; and had a frank gallant bearing, which made him handsomer in the eyes of women than many a man with better figure and features. Before he fell in love he was careless of his personal appearance, and wore corduroy inexpressibles, of so shabby and antiquated an aspect, that his friends cried fie upon him. But Walter answered they were good enough to drink in, and off went he and his noisy mates to "a house," where the whiskey and company were alike good. Without a doubt, he was at this time rather too much addicted to tavern revels. But he pulled up ere he materially hurt his constitution; and, though he never became an ascetic, he lived to say frequently and with impressive earnestness—"Depend upon it, of all vices drinking is the most incompatible with greatness." In his manner of taking all his amusements there was discernible that extravagant power of enjoyment, which is a desirable feature in youth. The frolic which attended his trips into the provinces, his long pedestrian excursions, the frantic delight he displayed on getting possession of some old border relic—a ballad or a horn—the boldness with which he mounted and subdued the most break-neck horses, all evidenced the energy of his constitution. His grave,

methodical old father admired him, but had a painful presentiment that he was not methodical enough, was too fond of pleasure, was too prone to vagabondizing. Once when Walter returned to his father's residence in George's Square, after a prolonged pedestrian excursion, the old man asked him how he had managed to live during his absence. "Pretty much like the young ravens," replied the son cheerily. "I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in the "Vicar of Wakefield." If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him, from cottage to cottage over the world." "I doubt," responded the sire, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape-gut*."

Scott had an early attachment of a somewhat romantic order to a young lady in a rank of life above him, which was terminated as first loves often are by the young lady marrying a more recent, if not a more worthy suitor. The first step young Scott took in the way of consoling himself under his disappointment, was to publish his translations of "Lenore," and the "Wild Huntsman," from Bürger in the October of 1796; the second step in the same direction was a much wiser and more effectual one—he fell in love again. On the rising of the court of session in July (1797), Scott made a trip to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Fergusson. After visiting Carlisle, Penrith, Ulswater, and Windermere, the trio fixed their head quarters at Gilstand, at which place he met at a ball (he had met her once before, when out riding), a young lady who had "a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set, and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown, and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing." This young lady, the orphan daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted loyalist, by his wife Charlotte Volere, and a ward of the Marquis of Downshire, became Walter Scott's wife on the 24th of

December, 1797. She was indeed a prize. At first old Mr. and Mrs. Scott disliked the thoughts of their son marrying a Frenchwoman, but as soon as they saw her, if their hearts were not won, their approval was obtained.

The young people were not rich. Here stand the annual sums of fees received from the bar, according to Scott's fee-book.

	£.	s.
1792-3.....	24	3
1793-4.....	57	15
1794-5.....	84	4
1795-6.....	90	0
1796-7.....	144	10
1797-8 • (year after marriage)	79	17
1798-9.....	135	9
1799-1800.....	129	13
1800-1801.....	170	0
1801-1802.....	202	12
1802-1803.....	228	18

But Mrs. Scott had at least £200 per annum, and doubtless Scott's father made the young people some allowance. Ere the end of the year 1799, however, Scott was put beyond immediate anxiety about money, by obtaining the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire, to which was attached an annual salary of £300. His appointment bears date the 16th Sept. 1799.

Scott took his young wife, first to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh, and shortly afterwards to a house in South Castle Street. At this date, and for several years subsequent to it, Scott acted as quarter-master and secretary to a volunteer cavalry corps. His brother officers of the "Light Horse" were of course amongst the first of his acquaintance to be introduced to his pretty bride. In the course of the year succeeding his marriage, he had occasion to make the following entry in the *Family Bible*,—"M. C. Scott puerum

edidit 14to. die Octobris 1798, qui postero die obiit apud Edinburgum." In the summer of this year Scott took for his wife a cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh. In the March of the next year he took Mrs. Scott to London, a place he had not visited since his early childhood. While there he received an intimation of his father's death. The worthy man was in his seventieth year, and had long been declining. He did not die so rich as it was anticipated he would, but there was an ample provision for his widow, and a handsome sum (*handsome* being used in a moderate sense) for each of his children. He was succeeded in his business by his son, Mr. Thomas Scott, who put what briefs he could into the hands of his brother Walter, but managed the affairs of the office with the reverse of success.

From the date of his appointment to the office of Sheriff depute of Selkirkshire, Scott may be regarded as comparatively a rich man. In 1804 he came in for another substantial windfall, his uncle, Captain Robert Scott, dying on the 10th of June in that year, and leaving him a property little short in value, of £6,000. This accession of wealth gave him a clear annual revenue of about £1,000. So he was in possession of a *comfortable* fortune, long before his pen earned him an *enormous* one. From the time of his publishing the translations from Bürger, Scott regularly kept at some literary work or other, and gradually the conviction grew upon him that book-making was to be his vocation. In 1799 he sold to a London publisher named Bell, (Monk Lewis being the negociator of the business) his version of Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen of the Iron Hand" for twenty-five guineas. In the January of 1802 appeared, from the house of Cadell and Davies, the two first volumes of the "Border Minstrelsy." The first edition of eight hundred copies was sold during the year, and Scott received from the publishers £78 10s. a sum insufficient to repay him his actual expenses for the collection of his materials. The success of this edition in-

duced Messrs. Longman to give £500 for the copyright of the "Minstrelsy." In 1803, Scott wrote his first article in the "Edinburgh Review," on Southey's *Amadis of Gaul*, and in the same number (the October) appeared another article from his pen on Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*. In the course of 1804 he contributed to "the Edinburgh," reviews of "Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*," "Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient English Poetry*," and the "*Life and Works of Chatterton*." In the May of 1804, "*Sir Tristrem*" was published by Constable. The author did not look for pecuniary compensation from this work, and he never sold the copyright. The first edition consisted of only a hundred and fifty copies; but gradually it obtained a certain amount of popularity, for in 1806, seven hundred and fifty copies were called for, and in 1811, a thousand.

In the September of 1803, it was that Wordsworth and his sister visited Scott, and made his acquaintance for the first time. Wordsworth found him the active, hospitable, intelligent country gentleman, full of cordiality and wit and learning, but apparently taking more pride in his horsemanship and adroitness in field sports, than in his poetical celebrity.

In 1804, Scott, for the purpose of residing within his Sheriffship four months in the year, as the law required, gave up his cottage at Lasswade, and took a lease of a house called Ashestiel, on the southern bank of the Tweed, a few miles from Selkirk; and on obtaining the considerable accession of fortune by his uncle's death, which has already been mentioned, he commenced a more grand and imposing style of living than he had hitherto maintained. He set up a close carriage for Mrs. Scott; and he surrounded himself with all the proper appendages of a country gentleman which his purse could command. And now his first great literary success was at hand—a success that was to make all his previous good fortune wear the sickly hue of failure.

At the commencement of January, 1805, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published. Of this poem forty-four thousand copies were disposed of in the trade, in the course of twenty-five years. The first edition gave Scott £169 6s. and when a second edition was called for, he sold the copyright for £500, the publishers (Messrs. Longman) adding £100 after the bargain was struck. Thus the author received for the Lay £769 6s. In this year, Scott took a step that was in the end to prove sadly disastrous to his fortunes. The lust of gain was already causing his Scotch blood to boil, and he became a partner in the printing business of his friend Ballantyne. This year also was remarkable in Scott's life for another circumstance, for it was then that he composed the opening chapters of "Waverley." "A small part of the MS. of Waverley was on paper bearing the watermark of 1805, the rest on paper of 1813."

In 1806, Scott always prudently keeping his eye on "the main chance" obtained by the aid of some influential friends, the office of "a clerk of session." It was arranged that Mr. Home, the gentleman who resigned the post on account of the infirmities of age, was during his life to receive the emoluments of the office, while Scott transacted its duties, and that at his death the gain as well as labour should be Scott's. Such an arrangement was common in those times, and on such terms a new patent for the joint advantage of Mr. Home and Mr. Scott was drawn out. Thus while he was designing to make literature the great business of his life, the wily and cautious poet secured to himself the reversion of a handsome income from the law-courts. To get over a difficulty that had arisen in this arrangement, Scott went to London in 1806, and amused himself with paying his respects to the unfortunate Caroline, Princess of Wales, at her little court at Blackheath. The wrongs of that Princess were then a favourite theme with the Tories, whose politics the Prince had uniformly opposed.

When, however, that royal husband changed his political opinions, the aspect of those wrongs changed also in the eyes of the Tories. Scott of course found her a delightful Princess, but he was grieved by the levity of her manner. The Princess conducted him during the evening to admire the flowers of a conservatory. The place being dark, and Scott hesitating, as with his lame leg he descended some steps which his royal conductress skipped down, that lady cried out "Oh! false and faint-hearted troubadour! you will not trust yourself with me for fear of your neck."

In the September of 1806, Messrs. Longman published those ballads, which being included in the "Minstrelsy" were already their property, together with his "Lyrical Pieces," for which they paid him £100. "Marmion" was published on the 23rd of February, 1808. Constable bought the copyright for £1,000 without having seen a line of it. But it did not tend to advance the author's reputation, although it found many admirers. Jeffrey criticised it severely in "The Edinburgh," and sent Scott the article and a friendly note, on the very morning of a Tuesday on which he was engaged to dine at his (Scott's) table. The note begged the author of "Marmion" not to resent the severity of some of his remarks. Scott of course was annoyed, but had the good sense not to allow his vexation to be manifest; he responded to Jeffrey's note in a friendly manner, and begged him to come punctually to dinner. Jeffrey came, and found his host as cordial as ever; but not so with Mrs. Scott. She was civil to her guest, but at the same time frigidly distant; and when he took leave of her on departing, she (and God bless her for it!) could not refrain from saying with much bitterness in her broken English, "Well, good night Mr. Jeffrey, dey tell me you have abused Scott in de Review, and I hope Mr. Constable has paid *you* very well for writing it."

Scott's literary engagements were now numerous, and he daily received propositions from publishers for new under-

takings, which want of time compelled him to decline. To give a complete list of his labours we do not intend, but we shall mention the principal of them. In the last week of April, 1808, appeared his edition, in eighteen volumes, of Dryden's Works. For his editorial services, and the memoir of Dryden, Scott was paid by William Miller of Albemarle Street, £756. At this time also he edited Strutt's unfinished romance of "Queenhoo Hall," Defoe's "Captain Carleton's Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession," and the "Memoirs of Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth." In this year too he wrote to a friend, "Swift is my *grande opus* at present, though I am under engagements of old standing, to write a life of Thompson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious; I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of "Somers's Tracts." Constable had engaged him to edit Swift, in the same manner as he had done Dryden, agreeing to pay him for his labour £1,500. What an enormous stock of work to have on hand at one time! Of course a large portion of the toil was borne by subordinates, whom the editor had in his pay. Scott himself frequently declared, that a great inducement to enter into these editorial engagements was the opportunity they afforded him to bring work to poor starving authors.

By this time Scott had four children, the full allowance of bairns Providence designed for him. Charlotte Sophia (his eldest daughter) was born in 1799, his eldest son Walter in 1801, Anna in 1803, and Charles in 1805. Scott was an excellent father. His children were brought up with proper freedom from those restraints, which are commonly applied and are so universally noxious to the inmates of nurseries and school rooms. Scott was their companion and playmate; it was to him they looked for their enjoyments; and the only important reserve he had from them was his literary

celebrity. He did not wish them to reverence and fear him as a great man, but to love him as a tenderly affectionate one. When "The Lady of the Lake" was first published, James Ballantyne asked Miss Scott how she liked it. "Oh," answered the little girl, "I have not read it; papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading poetry." About the same time too, little Walter came home from his daily visit to the High School, with his face stained with tears and blood. "Well, Wat," said his father, "what have you been fighting about to-day?" The young gentleman answered with much confusion that he had been called "a lassie." "Indeed!" said Mrs. Scott, "that was a terrible mischief to be sure." "You may say what you please, mamma," Wat answered roughly, "but I dinna think there's a *wauf* (shabbier) thing in the world than to be a lassie, to sit boring at a clout." It appeared on enquiry that "The Lady of the Lake" had suggested the ignominious nick-name.

Another anecdote will serve well to illustrate how Scott was regarded by his children. "My man," said a gentleman to little Walter, "you cannot surely help seeing that great people make more work about your papa, than they do about me or any of your uncles; what is it do you suppose that occasions this?" The little fellow after a period of grave consideration, answered, "It's commonly *him* that sees the hare sitting." Scott was not at all anxious that his daughters should be what is ordinarily termed "accomplished," but he trained them to take an interest in country sports, and to be courageous horse-women.

We now come to an important event in Scott's life. The review in the "Edinburgh Magazine" on "Marmion" was not forgotten by Scott; the memory of it lay rankling in his vanity. Moreover "The Edinburgh" had become wittily whiggish, and Scott had grown more and more a bitter tory. Consequently in the pages of that periodical, which had so cruelly stabbed at his literary pretensions, he was continually

meeting with contemptuous ridicule of his most dearly cherished political sentiments. Again he had had a personal difficulty with Constable (the proprietor of "The Edinburgh"), and a positive quarrel with Constable's partner, Mr. Alexander Gibson Hunter, an accomplished and influential gentleman—and a *whig*! Burning with fury, Scott determined to take vengeance on his enemies. He was already a partner in James Ballantyne's printing business. Why should not he, and James, and John Ballantyne start in Edinburgh, a new publishing house, and a new quarterly magazine? He would supply funds for carrying on the business, and be sleeping-partner—at least sleeping as far as name went; the Ballantynes (both, we may observe, from inexperience or natural disqualifications unfitted for the task) should be the workers and *nominal* upholders of the firm. Thus they would ruin Constable, and chastise the insolence of the "Edinburgh Review." Doubtless, there entered into this scheme of vengeance sanguine expectations of acquiring wealth; for Scott, though he loved art much, loved money a great deal more. On the 14th of January, 1809, he wrote to a friend. "***** Meanwhile, however, I have been concocting, at the instigation of various loyal and well-disposed persons, a grand scheme of opposition to the proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches, and consists of the following divisions. A new review in London, to be called "the Quarterly," William Gifford to be the editor; George Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning, if possible, Frere, and all the anti-Jacobins to be concerned. The first number is now in hand, and the allies, I hope and trust, securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can, and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the ark. You can so easily run off an article, either of learning or of fun, that it would be inexcusable not to afford us your assistance. Then, sir, to turn the

flank of Messrs. Constable and Co., and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which, in the vehemence of their whiggery, they have dared to indulge in towards me, I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday, first the celebrated printer, Ballantyne (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashestiel) in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher, with a long purse and a sound political creed, not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with John Murray of Fleet Street, the most enlightened and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co., who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly, I have caused the said Ballantyne to venture upon an 'Edinburgh Annual Register,' of which I send you a prospectus." Here we have the whole scheme—the publishing business, whereby to overthrow the hated Constable, the "Quarterly," wherein to attack his enemies of the "Edinburgh Review," and the "Edinburgh Annual Register," as a means whereby to promulgate his narrow political prejudices. Private feuds, political animosities, wounded vanity, a thirst for vengeance on his adversaries, and cupidity, combined to cause him to embark on this undertaking that was to result in lamentable catastrophe.

Amiable a man as Scott was—amiable as a husband, father, master, and friend—he was a rancorous foe. As an instance of the bitter hate and cold-hearted brutality he could display, under provocation, no stronger instance will be demanded by those most hostile to him, than his treatment of his unfortunate brother Daniel. This poor fellow passed through evil courses to disgrace, and was sent by his family to Jamaica. From that time Walter never regarded or mentioned him as a brother, but spoke of him when compelled to allude to him, as a relation. In

Jamaica Daniel behaved no better than he had done in Scotland, albeit he had the manly pride never to mention to anyone his tie of blood to the celebrated poet who disdained him. A physical coward, Daniel failed, in spirit and courage, in opposing some insurgent negroes against whom he had been sent; and he returned to Scotland with an additional weight of dishonour on his head. His brother refused to welcome him, but his mother opened her arms and received him to her bosom. His health, soon after his return to his native land, failed him; and broken in body and in mind by excesses and the obloquy of the unkind world, he died while still a young man. Nothing touched by the death of his playmate brother, by the consideration that that fallen and unfortunate man had gone to render his account at a tribunal where the Divine mercy is the only reasonable foundation for mortal hope, the poet refused to attend the funeral or wear mourning!

In 1809, the "Quarterly" appeared for the first time; and the publishing concerns of the Ballantynes commenced. As we do not intend to trouble our readers with minute statements as to the various misadventures and acts of mismanagement in that business, we may here say a few words of those brothers and their relation with Scott, and then, unless it be to make some passing allusion, we shall not have occasion to mention them again. James Ballantyne, it would appear, was a well-intentioned character; by the side of his brother he had a decided air of respectability. He was a large, ponderous man, very indolent and sleepy, and a prodigious glutton. Scott's letters to him are full of earnest entreaties that he would not eat so much. His good points were an easy temper, and a power of singing delightfully. Such was James. John was in every respect a contrast to his brother; a small, bustling, sanguine, energetic man, he wanted nothing to enable him to succeed in business except prudence and honesty! He was the real

mover and conductor of "the house," he it was who rushed headlong into ruinous undertakings, borrowed money on all sides, and made falsely fair statements of account to Scott, which were over and over again detected, exposed, reproved, and forgiven. He had inexhaustible animal spirits, and much humour—although it rarely rose above buffoonery; and he was an unblushing liar. James's habits were expensive, but John's far more so; the latter fitted up his villa in a most expensive and luxurious style, entertained his numerous friends with dinners of the choicest delicacy, made trips to Paris and those fair nymphs of Paris whose virtue is never questioned and whose charms are venal, and expended a comfortable annual income on horses and dogs. The capability of indulging these expensive tastes was the fruit of his connection with Scott, for both he and his brother were men of straw, and had scarcely any sure means of support till the successful author took them by the hand. It was a strange combination of circumstances and feelings that brought Scott into such intimate connection with them, and a stranger still that kept him in their power, although he saw that the one brother was criminally indolent and negligent, that the other was a bad and shuffling man of business, and that both combined to drain him of the profits he ought to have derived from his industrious pen. Of the way in which the Ballantynes drew enormous sums from Scott for no earthly service, the following passage from Lockhart will serve as a good illustration. "Mr. Puff" (*i.e.* John Ballantyne) "might well exult in the 'full and entire success' of this trip to Abbotsford. His friend had made it a *sine qua non* in the bargain with Constable, that he should have a third share in the bookseller's moiety of the copyright—and though Johnny had no more trouble about the publishing or selling of 'Rob Roy' than his own Cobbler of Kelso, this stipulation had secured him a *bonus* of £1,200, before two years passed!!!" The hold

that the Ballantynes (especially John) had on Scott was one which any lover of genius must feel pain at naming. The influence they subjected him to was flattery. In his presence as well as out of it they spoke of him as "their illustrious friend;" at all times they were ready to acknowledge that he had made them, and that the one passion of their lives was attachment to his person. And verily these two sycophants were sincere in their professions—but they were so with the sincerity of a horsefly.

In 1810, Scott edited Miss Seward's poems, and wrote his memoir of that lady.

In the May of 1810 was published "The Lady of the Lake," for the copyright of which, the poet got 2,000 guineas; but as the publishing house of John Ballantyne and Co. took three-fourths of the copyright (Miller, of London, taking *the other fourth*) Scott's payment from the poem was, or ought to have been, considerably more.

In the July of 1811, "The Vision of Don Roderick" was published, and the proceeds from it were given, as a subscription, to the committee in London, collecting relief for the Portuguese.

In the January of 1812, Scott, who had long performed the duties of his clerkship of session, without payment, entered on the enjoyments of the emoluments of that office, and so, with his sherifffdom, had a clear income of £1,600 per annum, apart from literature and private fortune. This year too, witnessed a passage in Scott's life, calculated, perhaps, to raise a little good-natured ridicule, rather than admiration. Murray (the publisher) reported to Scott, that Lord Byron had conversed with the Prince Regent at a ball, and that, in the course of their talk, his Royal Highness spoke with great warmth of the genius of the author of "The Lay." Scott, delighted at the intelligence, wrote to Byron an apology *for having been cut up* in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and then

went on to allude to the complimentary speeches of the greatest gentleman in Europe. Byron responded by a friendly letter confirming Murray's report of the royal eulogy, to which Scott rejoined with another letter of gratitude and ecstasy. Scott had never seen Byron, and in 1809 he had written to a friend, "it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me."

The year 1812 was remarkable in Scott's life for another event. In the May of that year, he moved from Ashestiel to Abbotsford, a property lying on the banks of the Tweed, and comprising a comfortable but small house, which he bought for £4,000. This was the modest commencement of the Abbotsford estate. As money and occasion served, Scott persevered in purchasing contiguous fields, and incorporating them with the Abbotsford belt, and year by year he did something for the enlargement or decoration of his house, till eventually the extent of his land, and the imposing aspect of his mansion, would of themselves have made him regarded as one of the principal proprietors of the county. At the commencement of 1813, was published "Rokeby," and "The Bridal of Triermain" followed soon afterwards.

In 1813, Scott's pride suffered a cruel mortification. Already had his publishing business—*i. e.*, the publishing business of "John Ballantyne and Co."—become so deranged, and pressed for money, that in May, 1813, the Messrs. Ballantyne, after exhausting every other source of ready money, applied to their great adversary, Constable, for pecuniary aid, offering him, as a purchase, various books they had published since 1809, and shares of Mr. Scott's poems. The application was a sharp lesson to Scott's pride, but had the good result, not only of obtaining the much needed money, but also of restoring friendly communications between Constable and Scott. In this year, he was complimented with the royal request, that he would assume the office of poet-laureate, a post, which it is well known,

he declined, from a feeling that its duties would be irksome to him, and a fear that his acceptance of the place would lay him open to the charge of cupidity. Without doubt, as he now had upwards of £2,000 per annum, from sources altogether distinct from literature, it was only decent in him to leave the modest stipend (under £100 a-year) attached to the laureateship for some less fortunate poet.

At length, on the 1st of July, 1814, "Scott's Life and Edition of Swift," in nineteen vols. 8vo. (commenced in 1808) issued from the press. And on the 1st of February, in the same year, appeared in "The Scot's Magazine," an advertisement, that in the following month of March, "Waverley: or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since, a novel, in 3 vols. 12mo." would be published. The terms Scott made with his publishers, were those of "half profits." Of course his booksellers wanted him to put his name on the title-page, but he was determined on secrecy, and wrote to John Ballantyne—

"No, John, I will not own the book—
 I wont, you Picaroon.
 When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
 The A. of W—— shall bait the hook,
 And flat fish bite as soon,
 As if before them they had got
 The worn-out wriggler—Walter Scott."

The year 1814, in which "Waverley" appeared, was Scott's forty-third year. It would be well for young gentlemen and ladies in their teens, who think it the easiest thing imaginable to "dash off a novel," to reflect on this.

In the autumn of 1814, Scott, as he passed through Edinburgh on his return from the Shetland Isles, came to terms with Constable *in re* "The Lord of the Isles." The publisher gave him £1,500 for one-half of the copyright, the author keeping the other half himself. The sale of

this poem, compared with that of Scott's previous works, was so disappointing that the author could not shut his eyes to the fact that his popularity, as a poet, was no longer in existence. For a moment or two his countenance expressed his annoyance, but soon he rallied himself, and said cheerily to James Ballantyne, "Well, well, James, so be it; but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else." And in another minute the determined man was at his desk, composing a chapter of "Guy Mannering."

On the 24th of February, exactly two months after the author had completed his last poem, "Guy Mannering" was published. This novel, it would appear, was written in six weeks—a feat not less dishonourable to Scott as an artist than it is wonderful. The rapidity with which Scott fabricated his novels is indeed surprising, and is of itself enough to excuse, if not to justify, the uncharitable suspicion that has at various times, and in many circles, been maintained—that he was deeply indebted to the labour and talents of less celebrated authors. The following portion of a letter written to his favourite brother Tom, then paymaster of the 70th regiment in Canada, certainly does not tend to repel the whispered detractions:—"Dear Tom,—A novel here, called 'Waverley,' has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another, with the 'Lord of the Isles,' which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people

"To lay the bantling at a certain door,
Where laying store of faults, they'd fain heap more."

You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the Transatlantic public; for you must know there is also a counter report—that *you* have written the said

‘Waverley.’ Send me a novel intermixing your exuberant and natural humour, with any incidents and descriptions of scenery you may see—particularly with characters and traits of manners. I will give it all the cobbling that is necessary, and, if you do but exert yourself, I have not the least doubt it will be worth £500; and, to encourage you, you may, when you send the MS., draw on me for £100 at fifty days’ sight—so that your labours will at any rate not be quite thrown away. You have more fun and descriptive talent than most people; and all that you want—*i. e.* the mere practice of composition—I can supply, or the devil’s in it. Keep this matter a dead secret, and look knowing when ‘Waverley’ is spoken of.”

The mystery surrounding the authorship of the “Waverley” novels, much as it has been talked of, did not exist to any great extent in the best literary circles even at the first; and ere a short lapse of time, every author of position and decent professional connections knew well enough who “the great unknown” was. When Jeffrey reviewed “Waverley” in “The Edinburgh,” he did not hesitate to proclaim his conviction of its authorship. Scott long persisted in affecting ignorance of who the author of “Waverley” was; but much of the fun he had in doing so arose from the knowledge that those he pretended to blind were well acquainted with the secret: it was the game of a merry child playing bo-peep with its mother; and when he adroitly rebuffed the ill-bred inquisitiveness of the Prince-Regent, he well knew that he deceived nobody, and that his mock-incognito was merely the protest of a wayward and petted mortal determined to gang his ain gait. Lockhart says that Scott was very particular, even at an early date of the mystery, in coming to a fair and truthful understanding with any of his friends whom he deemed had a right to the direct answer, yea or nay, to their inquiries. Still to the impertinent questionings of intrusive people he did not

hesitate to reply with perplexing sallies of humour, or with direct lies.

On the rising of the Court of Session in the March of 1815, Scott went to London for a burst of dissipation. It was during this visit to the metropolis that he made the personal acquaintance of Byron, and dined at Carlton House at the table of the Prince Regent. The mirth at the royal board was of a higher pitch than the wit, which of course was kept down to the measure of the host's understanding, but Sir Walter's heart was won by the Prince's cordial manner. Ever after that dinner the poet, although in letters to his especial intimates, he spoke slightly of "our fat friend," using the very words of the celebrated beau, was the true and faithful servant of George the Fourth; and on the occasion of some one enquiring what estimate he formed of that royal individual's powers of mind, he, like a dutiful subject, cannily avoided the question, by replying "as to his abilities, spoken of as distinct from his charming manners, how could any one form a fair judgment of that man who introduced whatever subject he chose, discussed it just as long as he chose, and dismissed it when he chose?"

In 1815, Scott went to Brussels and to Paris, after the fighting was done, to take part in the ovations of the allies. At Paris he was received with marked attention, in some instances with enthusiastic cordiality, by the leaders of those great warriors who were assembled in that capital. The Lords Cathcart, Aberdeen, and Castlereagh, greeted him with hearty good-fellowship, and introduced him to the best circles. Wellington treated him with that manner of dignified urbanity and kindness, of which that cold and wary man was so consummate a master. At a dinner given by the Earl of Cathcart, whereat the poet presented himself in the blue and red uniform of the Selkirkshire Lieutenancy, he was introduced to the Emperor Alexander. "In what

affair were you wounded?" asked the Czar, glancing at the lame leg. Blushing, Scott replied, that "it was a natural infirmity." "I thought Lord Cathcart mentioned that you had served," said the Emperor, sharply. And Scott had to pacify the imperial questioner by confessing to having seen service "in some slight actions, such as the battle of the Cross Causeway, and the affair of Moredun Mill." Afraid of displaying his ignorance of these important military operations, the great Alexander put an end to the examination. At that dinner Platoff sat next Scott, and was delighted with him, though the two had no means, save gesticulations and glances, of interchanging their thoughts. Blucher, certainly a fighting rather than a reading man, was extravagant in his demonstrations of delight on forming the acquaintance of the famous author. And when Scott and his companion, Pringle, were walking in the Rue de la Paix, Hetman happening to canter up, attended by some of his Cossacks, that gallant soldier pulled up his horse, sprung from the saddle to the ground, and having bestowed a smacking kiss on each cheek of the poet, offered him through the tongue of an aide-de-camp, to mount him on the best of his Ukraine steeds at the grand review to take place on the next day. And so mounted, riding amongst Hetman's staff, the Selkirkshire lieutenant aided in the grand closing *spectacle* on the *Champs de Mars*. The information he picked up in the course of this trip and the impressions made upon him by the aspect of continental affairs, were sent to Scotland in epistles, first for domestic consumption, and then to pass without delay through Ballantyne's presses, under the name of "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk." Thirsting for news from the scene of triumphant rejoicing, and with no such daily papers as we now possess to satisfy their craving, the public devoured with a savage relish these letters, abounding in graphic pictures, erroneous statements of fact, and unsound short-sighted and superficial views of great political questions.

By the close of October, in 1815, Scott published his poem of "The Field of Waterloo," the profits of the first edition of which were contributed by the author to the fund raised for the widows and children of the soldiers slain in battle.

Shortly before the termination of 1815, Scott commenced "The Antiquary," and early in the May of '16 it was published. On the 8th of that same month, also, his brother, Major John Scott, died, leaving £6,000 to be divided equally between his two surviving brothers—Tom and Walter. In the October of this same year appeared "The Edinburgh Annual Register," containing Scott's historical sketch of 1814; and on the first of December was published the first series of the "Tales of my Landlord." At the opening of 1817 appeared "Harold, the Dauntless, by the author of the Bridal of Triermain," and on the 31st of December in the same year was published "Rob Roy." The last proof sheet of the novel was sent to James Ballantyne, with the following characteristic note:—

"Dear James,

"With great joy

I send you Roy ;

'Twas a tough job,

But we're done with Rob."

He had good reason to speak of it as "a tough job," for much of it was penned while he was writhing under that terrible affliction—cramp in the stomach, from which he used to suffer unspeakable torments, and which first attacked him in 1817. It was at the commencement of this year, that is, in the winter of 1816-17, that Scott made an unsuccessful attempt to change his clerkship for a seat on the bench of the Scotch Court of Exchequer.

In 1818, Scott first conferred the honour of his friendship on his future son-in-law and manly biographer—Lockhart. He was then, perhaps, at the happiest period of his life.

For several years his novels had brought him as much as £10,000 per annum. His literary fame was still on the increase, and in his picture of life he had the pleasure of hope as well as anticipation. As yet, his dangerous prosperity had not seduced him into extravagance of expenditure; and though the publishing affairs of "John Ballantyne and Co." were not in a flourishing state, they were not yet a source of alarm to the monied partner. His health, though it had felt the first inroads of lasting disease, was still enviable. He had surrounded himself with a circle of devoted friends and dependents; his genius was respected in every country that possessed or boasted of the slightest elements of refinement, and—honour dearest and nearest to his heart!—in his ain countree he was looked upon as the representative man of Scotland.

In the June of 1818, "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" was published. In the autumn, Lockhart paid his first visit to Abbotsford, and was naturally delighted by every thing he witnessed there, with the exception of the sufferings of his host, who was tortured with cramp in the body. So excruciating was the agony he endured in these prolonged attacks of spasm, that his cries of anguish were not only heard throughout the house, but by any loiterer in the adjacent grounds. As soon, however, as the paroxysm had subsided, and he had received a few hours of refreshing sleep, he mounted on his horse and rode boldly over the country for twenty or forty miles. Any less determined man would have died; but he, with one of those extraordinary efforts which Mrs. Chick exhorted her dying friend to make, fought the adversary, and with eventual success. Tried as he was at this time, the exertions he made every day of his life were enormous. Not only did he ply his pen with his usual industry, but he was ever ready to talk and be hospitable to the numerous visitors who, with or without introductions, forced themselves on his notice. His diurnal

correspondence would, to most men, have been a week's hard work; he was one of the very *few* celebrated men conscientiously punctual in replying to letters; and of the extraordinary applications made to him from every quarter, by the post, a volume of anecdotes might be told. The best which suggests itself to our mind at the moment is the following. One morning the post brought him an enormous despatch, which he opened hastily (supposing it had some omnipotent frank on the direction) without observing that he had been charged £5. for it. It contained a MS. play, sent him by a young lady of New York (the authoress of it) who modestly requested Scott "to read and correct it, equip it with prologue and epilogue, procure for it a favourable reception from the manager of Drury Lane, and make Murray or Constable bleed handsomely for the copyright." But the best of the joke is yet to come. Two or three weeks elapsed, when there arrived another packet of equal dimensions, of which Scott, absent again, broke the seal. Imagine his horror and astonishment when he saw before him the self-same tragedy of *The Cherokee Lovers*, with another epistle from the authoress stating, that "as the winds had been boisterous, she feared the vessel entrusted with her former communication might have foundered, and therefore judged it prudent to forward a duplicate." The year 1818 closed to Scott with an important commercial transaction; he sold to Messrs. Constable all his then existing copyrights, his "eild kye," for £12,000.

It was in 1819 that he suffered most acutely under the infernal cramp. His friends were alarmed, and they had good reason to be so; his compact form became thin, and his face emaciated, the disfiguring hue of jaundice was in his haggard countenance, and his hair, hitherto only somewhat greyish, became snow-white. His eyes however burnt more brightly than ever, and the contrast of their brilliance with the rest of his deadly aspect was positively terrible. At

one time all Edinburgh believed him to be at the point of death; and he himself being of the same opinion, called his children round his bed, and blessing them bade them "farewell." "For myself," he said to them, "my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God, but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer. God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me that I may turn my face to the wall." But he was to recover, and do much good work ere he died. During the progress of such fierce struggles between life and death was it that Scott wrote, or composed to an amanuensis, "The Bride of Lammermoor," "The Legend of Montrose," and almost the whole of "Ivanhoe."

In the July of 1819, Scott's eldest son left the paternal home, and commenced his career in the army as a cornet in the 18th Regiment of Hussars. Of the intercourse between Scott and his boy, as far as his letters to him enable one to form an opinion, it is impossible to speak with too great admiration; the wise counsel, the affectionate consideration, and fatherly confidence of those letters are most touching. Perhaps there is in them a dash of worldliness, of crafty prudence, more befitting a Polonius than a poet; but then it must be remembered that Scott was sending out his inexperienced child into a dangerous portion of a wicked world, and if he whispered canny hints into the lad's ear "to look out for the main chance," he was equally careful to appeal on all occasions to his honour and gentlemanly delicacy, and to bestow on him lessons of care for the weak that would have made Lord Chesterfield open his eyes with astonishment. On the 18th of December, 1819, "Ivanhoe" was published; and on the 24th of the same month the

author lost his aged and dearly beloved mother. We may here remark that "Ivanhoe" marks the acmè of Scott's literary success ; it was itself the most successful of all the novels from the same source, but with the next which he put forth, the immediate sale of his works began gradually to decline.

In the March of 1820, Messrs. Longman and Co. published "The Monastery;" and the *Gazette* announcing his advancement by the royal benignity to the rank of a baronet was dated March 30, and published April 2, 1820. His elevation, if it affected his industry in any way, only increased it that he might win the opulence necessary for the graceful maintenance of titled dignity. In the September of that same year, Longman, in conjunction with Constable, published "The Abbot." About this time also Scott undertook a heavy literary task, which promised him but little addition to his reputation, and from which he had determined to derive no profit. John Ballantyne's health, broken by dissipation, and all those saddening pleasures for which a man of mirth lives, was exerting himself to dispel the thought of approaching death by running into new indulgences, and costly pleasures, of which he had all his life long had far too many. Amongst the undertakings of the dying man was the building a villa for his soul to rejoice in, in his native place—Kelso. Affected at the sight of his comrade of many years, so ardent, so mercurial, so exquisitely humorous, so full of affectionate and adorative assurances, so bent on driving away gloomy care, and, alas! so clearly branded with the arrow-head of decay, Scott offered to help him to get funds for the completion of the villa by presenting him with biographical sketches of the best novelists, to be affixed to their works, which it was proposed should be re-issued in a series called "Ballantyne's Novelists' Library." The first of the clumsy volumes which were the result of this proposition, was published in the

February of 1821. In the November of 1820, Sir Walter received an honour, perhaps greater than any he had obtained before, in being unanimously invited to the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—an invitation which, it is needless to say, he accepted.

In the January of 1821, was published “Kenilworth.” Scott’s friendship, rather call it infatuation! permitted John Ballantyne to receive his usual magnificent payment for doing and risking nothing, out of the profits of this novel; but it was the last great work of Scott’s from which he was to derive any advantage. On the 16th of June, 1821, John Ballantyne died. By his will, he “left” his patron a legacy of £2,000. But on entering into his affairs his executors discovered there was no estate out of which to pay this bequest. The astounding little liar had died insolvent. In announcing his death to Cornet Scott, the author of “Waverley” said, “I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, *who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do.*” In the July of 1821 Scott was in London, and witnessed the coronation of George the Fourth.

Always with a bias to ostentation, though he had the good taste to cultivate simplicity of manners as a contrast to his arrogant affectations, Scott now set about making Abbotsford a magnificent palace. For many years he had expended loose cash, to a grave amount, in purchasing old armour such as his ancestors might have worn, and in blazoning windows and ceilings with the arms of Scotts, of different families, whose ancestors were supposed to—may be did—have their share in producing Sir Walter’s immediate progenitors, the “Edinburgh Attorney,” the jobber, and certain Scotch farmers further back; but stained glass, and painted compartments would not satisfy the ambition of Sir Walter, the baronet: he must have a residence fit for a gentleman of ancient lineage, a castle of the nineteenth

century ! Forthwith, masons and bricklayers and house-decorators were set to work. But how was this to be paid for ? By accumulations from Sir Walter's princely income ? By no means. Sir Walter was not beforehand with the world, save in respect of his landed estate ; great as was his love of money, his passion for display was greater, and he lived well up to his income. But, was his landed estate sufficient to bear the burden of a debt ? By no means. Sir Walter well knew that it would scarcely be sufficient, after his death, for the maintenance of his son's dignity as a baronet. How, then, were these expenses to be met ? By pawning futurity. Scott, with all his experience and unprecedented success as an author, sold himself to the publishers in order that he might gratify a paltry vanity, the vulgarity of which was not one whit lessened by the elegance and the comfort of his new abode. First he sold the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December 1819 and January 1821, namely, "Ivanhoe," "The Monastery," "the Abbot," and "Kenilworth," for 5,000 guineas. For these four novels he had already received £10,000. Next, he sold his future labours, Constable paying him in bills for four as yet unwritten works of fiction. To fulfil his part of the contract Sir Walter dashed off within two years "Peveril of the Peak," "Quentin Durward," "St Ronan's Well," and "Redgauntlet." "By that time," says his son-in-law, "the new castle was complete, and overflowing with all its splendour ; but, by that time, the end also was approaching."

In the December of 1821, "The Pirate" was published. Before passing from this year we must cursorily observe that it was in it Sir Walter's political feelings, yearly growing more rancorous and ungovernable, hurried him into a humiliating connexion with the affairs of "The Beacon" newspaper.

On the 30th of May, 1822, the "Fortunes of Nigel"

was published. This novel was followed in June by the dramatic sketch, "Halidon Hall." Of this last-named contemptible performance it is impossible to speak with common patience. That Scott should have the indecency to publish a dramatic sketch, which took him only two mornings to write, is a good cause of irritation to anyone capable of loving art. It was in 1822, that George the Fourth paid his memorable visit to Scotland, and was received in Edinburgh with an enthusiasm and theatrical pomp, that are both alike to be attributed to Sir Walter's exertions. The venerable capital of the North on that occasion swarmed with men in the Highland costume. So long had Scott dwelt on the poetry of the clans, and so much ardent romance had he expended in rendering attractive their wretchedness and cruel barbarity, that he seems by this time to have brought himself to think that the Highlanders were the only portion of the Scottish race deserving a moment's consideration. If Sir Walter, the representative of Scottish intelligence, cherished such a sentiment, it can surprise no one that the monarch was altogether ignorant of any historical distinctions between the Highlands and Lowlands. George the Fourth had a general notion that Scotchmen were divided into clans, lived on oatmeal, were especially subject to an inconvenient affection of the skin, and disliked on festive occasions the use of breeches. Acting on this profound and accurate knowledge of one of his kingdoms, he arrayed himself in a brilliant Stuart tartan, and all the other flaunting rags of Celtic nakedness. The farce culminated, when his majesty at the Parliament House banquet, in a burst of patriotic ardour, proposed, as a toast, "The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes."*

* The reader does not want to be reminded of the cutting reproof Scott's enthusiasm for kings received from the broken whisky glass.

In 1823, in January, appeared "Peveril of the Peak." In the following April, Sir Walter heard of the death of his favorite brother, Thomas Scott, so frequently mentioned in this memoir. In June, "Quentin Durward" was published. In December, appeared "St. Ronan's Well." In this year, also, Scott wrote his able article on Romance, for the Supplement of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." In 1824, Scott wrote and published only one novel, "Redgauntlet;" the cause of this moderation was fear that he was overcropping himself. His later works had been received with comparative coldness. "The Trade" began to hint that he was producing too rapidly, and none knew better than Scott himself that his pitiful eagerness after money had made him guilty of the short-sighted policy of looking more to the quantity than the quality of that with which he supplied the market. In the October of this year his second son, Charles, commenced his residence at Brazen-nose College, Oxford.

The Christmas of 1824, and the opening of 1825, saw high revel at Abbotsford. The castle and all its costly decorations were completed, and its magnificent rooms were thrown open to receive the nobles of the land, amongst whom Sir Walter had gained a well-deserved footing. The palace was lighted throughout with oil-gas, from roof to basement,—a most expensive way of illuminating a country mansion. The splendour was greatest on the occasion of a ball given in celebration of the engagement of Sir Walter's heir, and a young lady of great wealth and beauty—one Miss Jane Jobson, or, as the inmates of Abbotsford preferred speaking of her, "the heiress of Lochore." Never, again, in Sir Walter's life was there to be dancing in those halls; and the next occasion of throwing open the entire suite of reception rooms was, when a gloomy crowd assembled to attend the body of the great writer to the tomb.

A dark change was now to come over Scott's career. Sir Walter's eldest son and Miss Jobson were married at Edinburgh on the 3rd day of February, the father settling Abbotsford on his boy, reserving only a life-rent for himself. Shortly after the wedding, the young soldier was gazetted a captain in the King's Hussars, for which step his father paid £3,500. Early in June were published "The Talisman," and "The Betrothed." In July he went upon a tour through various parts of Ireland, Captain Scott with his bride being then stationed in the Emerald Isle. In the January of 1826, he had to confess to the world that he was unable to meet the enormous pecuniary demands to which he had rendered himself liable. To give an accurate picture of all the intricate complications which brought about this disastrous position, would be useless, even if it were possible. The sources of Scott's embarrassment commenced with his connexion with the Ballantynes. It has already been told how the Ballantyne house borrowed money of Constable, borrowed money anywhere. James Ballantyne's printing-house borrowed of Ballantyne and Co's publishing house; both became involved and went begging to "the trade," and any banker who would listen to their representations; and these transactions and involvements went on, year by year becoming more obscure and increasing in magnitude. Strange to say Scott, the prudent, the canny, who could beat a horsedealer in a bargain, who accurately kept an account of his personal expenses down to the pence he paid at toll-gates, allowed his partners to pledge his credit on reams of accommodation paper to whatever amounts they liked. The books of "the concerns" were never balanced, and Scott never took the trouble to inquire into the extent of his liabilities. To imagine that he was ignorant of their existence, of course would be absurd; he resolutely looked away from them; he saw in his talents and their popularity an inexhaustible

mine of wealth, he still looked forward to many years of toil, and he believed he should work through his difficulties, commercial debts and private ones too. In due time Constable began to totter; Scott knew if the great publisher fell, the house of Ballantyne would go to; moreover, Scott remembered how Constable had stood by him in the hour of need. The promptings of interest and affection caused him to pledge his credit in behalf of the bookseller. Then came the commercial crisis of the close of 1825; and in 1826, Constable, and Hurst, and Ballantyne, were not the only ones who went to the ground. The liabilities of Ballantyne and Co. were all the property of the Co. Scott found on due examination of his affairs, that against the printing and publishing concerns of himself and partner was a debt of upwards of £120,000; and he also had a heavy private debt of £10,000.

Naturally the creditors desired their money, and fierce were their cries of indignation, when they found that not twelve months before the crash, Scott had parted with all his real property, except a life-rent in Abbotsford. Certainly the affair had an unpleasant aspect. No one, not a near and loving relation of Scott, could believe him ignorant of his embarrassments when he signed away his estate. A general impression prevailed, that the author of "Waverley" had attempted to defraud his creditors; and it was openly declared by most of those, especially interested in the question, that the settlement on Captain Scott was illegal, and that the law should declare it so. For ourselves, we do not for a moment suppose Scott guilty of this dishonour; doubtless in January 1825, he knew that he was, apart from his intellects, an almost penniless man, but he was sanguine, and he had a fair show of reason for believing that with *time* allowed him he could free himself from his embarrassments—but *the time* was not allowed him. In 1826 came the deluge.

When the creditors were most indignant, and were proclaiming the settlement of Abbotsford a fraudulent one, Scott met them boldly, and in a calm resolute manner made them an offer which was in substance just this. "Good gentlemen, deal hardly by me and you shall be dealt hardly by; go to law, and wrench Abbotsford from me and my son, if you like; should you succeed in your attempt, when you've sold me up, what with delay and ruinous law expenses, a miserable dividend you'll get; so much *the law* will allow you, and no more shall you have; but wait with patience, spare Abbotsford—the child of my vanity—spare my pride—and in return I'll *work* for you, *work* for you till every penny is paid." There has been much talk about Scott's *honourable* conduct to his creditors; the epithet is most out of place; honour, and consideration to them, never entered into Sir Walter's calculations; his object was to have Abbotsford to himself and his family, and to achieve that he offered the only terms that were likely to be accepted. Had Scott been the chivalrously honourable man in this matter, that some would wish to represent him, he would have done his best to let his creditors have Abbotsford, and every chattel it contained, for the *immediate* payment of a large portion of his debt, and would then have worked hard to pay the remainder.

After due consideration, and much wrangling, the creditors accepted the terms. Forthwith, the establishment at Abbotsford was reduced; footmen were discharged; the old coachman, still retained, yoked his horses to the plough; and old retainers, who loved Scott better than their life, were sent to seek their living among strangers. The splendid suites of rooms, so lately opened for use, were shut up, and throughout the family a rigid system of economy was commenced. The house and furniture in Castle-street, Edinburgh, were sold. And Sir Walter set to work;—what a frightful last effort it was! It is a comfort to know that

he would have toiled in the same way, even if he had been more fortunately circumstanced. Already, he had been visited with first incursions of that disease which was to carry him to the grave. In 1822, when he was overtaking his brain to get money to fit up his palace with, God punished his sin, by visiting him with an attack of apoplexy. This circumstance should be remembered, for amongst the false statements that have obtained popular credence, is one—that he *brought on* his apoplectic affection by toiling for his creditors.

In June of 1826, “Woodstock” was published, and met with a rapid sale, the public interest being aroused by the calamities of the author. It quickly brought the Ballantyne creditors a clear sum of £8,000. But ere its publication, another severe sorrow fell on Scott. His beloved wife died on May the 16th. This loss deeply affected him, perhaps more than all his other troubles. There was something heroic in the way Scott now faced his cares. Sighs and tears were left for the sleepless nights of his widowed bed; by day he was the same Scott as ever, gentle to his servants, tenderly affectionate to his children, persevering in his toil, and cheerful, buoyant—even boisterously humorous, in society. He had on his mind all the cares the world knew of, and in addition to them the horrible certainty that apoplectic blood was clogging his brain—that his mind was already failing him. No wonder that his figure drooped, that the white head was carried nearer to the ground, and that his face grew pale and worn.

In the October of 1826 he went to London, and was received with marked sympathy and honour wherever he showed himself. From London he went to Paris, where his reception was equally flattering. He returned from his triumphant tour with improved health and spirits, and with valuable materials for his “Life of Napoleon.” That “Life,” so delightful to a superficial reader, so valueless as

an historical work, was published about the middle of June, 1827. So great was its success, that the first and second editions alone brought the Ballantyne creditors £18,000. The entire work was completed within two years from its commencement, and the author could not have expended more than twelve months' labour on it.

Early in the winter of 1827 was published the first series of "Chronicles of the Canongate." In December appeared the first "Tales of a Grandfather;" and in this year Scott's copyrights being offered for sale by Constable's creditors, were purchased jointly by Scott's creditors in behalf of Scott, and by Cadell, for £8,500—one half for Scott, the other for Cadell—a lucky purchase for all concerned save the sellers. By this means, half the copyright of all Sir Walter's novels, from "Waverley" to "Quentin Durward" inclusive, was recovered to the author; and he and his spirited publisher were able to put forth a uniform edition of all the novels, for which there was a prodigious demand.

In the spring of 1828, "The Fair Maid of Perth" was published. Sir Walter saw the opening of April in London, where he remained for six weeks, enjoying the flattering kindness of the most distinguished personages of the capital. But pleasure did not interfere with business. By Christmas he had the second series of "Grandfather's Tales" ready for the press, and had made considerable progress with "Anne of Gierstein," which novel appeared during the following Spring Session. On the very day of its completion he began his "Compendium of Scottish History" for Dr. Lardner's Cyclopædia, for the two volumes of which he was paid £1,500. The first of these volumes was published before the end of the year.

A literary success Sir Walter had at this time gladdened his heart exceedingly. The sale of the collected novels was far greater than his sanguine hopes had suggested it would be. The monthly demand was for as many as 35,000.

In writing to his son, now Major Scott, he observed:—
“The sale of the novels is pro-di-gi-ous. If it last but a few years, it will clear my feet of old incumbrances.” By December he had ready for the press the last of the Scottish series of “Tales of a Grandfather.”

Paralysis and apoplexy were attacking him; but he was resolved on a bold contest with those fatal adversaries. He put himself under the severest regimen, confined himself for weeks to porridge and water, and even in his easier periods relinquished his cherished indulgence of a cigar, and confined himself to half a glass of whiskey and water per diem. But in opposition to the admonitions of his physicians, he kept at work. He told his son-in-law that he must either continue his old habits of toil, or go mad—and probably he was right. In the March of 1830, he was writing his “Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft,” and a fourth series of “Tales of a Grandfather”—the subject being French history. On the 26th of June, Scott heard of the death of George the Fourth, and was much afflicted by the intelligence; for he was constituted to feel warm sentiments of love and reverence for even a worse monarch, and without a doubt he had experienced consistent and delicate support from that unhappy king. Only a short time previous to his death, His Majesty had ordered Scott to be put on a new commission for examining and editing the MSS. collections of the exiled Stuarts; and had, moreover, intimated to Sir Walter his readiness to advance him to the rank of a Privy Councillor. This latter offer Scott had the good taste to decline. Soon after the end of the law term in July, Sir Walter resigned his Clerkship of Session, and entered on a retiring pension of £800 per annum. The Home Secretary intimated to him that the Government were desirous to award him an additional pension, so that his income might not suffer by this retirement; but after obtaining permission from his creditors to consult only his own feel-

ings on the matter, he resolved on not profiting by the liberality of the nation.

The task of the biographer is now to be merely the brief narrative of a series of heart-rending events. Towards the end of the November of 1830, Scott had another attack of apoplexy, and it was painfully manifest to Mr. Laidlaw and James Ballantyne that the powers of the great mind were giving way rapidly. Scott was employed upon his last novel—published only to make the admirers of his genius turn from it sick at heart—and James Ballantyne told him it would not do. The printer appears to have confined his objections to the subject rather than its treatment, and to have been himself not alive at first to the cause of the tale's inferiority. But Scott knew himself only too well; for years he had striven to conceal the progress of his decay, which now he clearly saw must be patent to others. He startled, and struck a dagger to his printer's affectionate heart, by assuring him, by letter, that delicacy might be laid aside, that he was aware of his pitiable condition, that he would lay aside "The Count of Paris," and go abroad—to see if the God of foreign lands would do more for his health than the God of his native country appeared willing to do. Unfortunately this wise resolve was not acted on till Sir Walter had suffered many inconveniences and insults he might have been spared. The political world was then in a tumult of agitation, the young life and intellect of the country were determined on Reform, and a death-blow was to be struck to that school of Toryism of which Scott had long been a chief support and ornament. He determined to make his protest against the popular movement by a fourth epistle from "Malachi Malagrowther." He wrote the letter—alas! how unlike its predecessors of 1826. Ballantyne and Cadell both dissuaded him from publishing it; friendship compelled them to perform the trying duty of telling him that he at length lived in times he did not

understand; that his arguments against Reform were behind the age, as he might learn from the newspapers and journals he had not studied for years. In short, that to publish his letter would be to expose himself to the derision of the vulgar and the compassion of the elevated. Scott saw they were right honest counsellors, but the agony he suffered was not the less. Mr. Cadell says of this affair, "Sir Walter never recovered it." To give the sufferer comfort, the publisher and James Ballantyne urged him to resume "Count Robert," and Sir Walter acted on their well-intentioned advice. "If we did wrong," observed Cadell, "we did it for the best; we felt that to have spoken out fairly on this as we had done on the other subject, would have been to make ourselves the bearers of a death-warrant."

Unfortunately Sir Walter persisted in still taking an active part in local politics, and in so doing, exposed himself to the odious brutality of election mobs. In the March of 1831, at Jedburgh, he addressed the freeholders of Roxburgh, and instead of being listened to with that passionate love and admiration he had for years experienced in public life, even from his hottest opponents, he was received with laughter and hisses, and yells of hatred. His words—rambling, obscure, dictatorial, and incoherent—were inaudible from the uproar to the majority of those present. He railed at English liberalism, at the French, at modern innovations. At last he discontinued his vain efforts, and his face glowing with futile wrath, he cried, "I regard your gabble no more than the geese on the green." Shortly afterwards, however, he made a more dignified utterance. The business of the meeting being over, he rose, every trace of passion gone, and as he did so, bowed courteously to the assembly. On this a few ruffians recommenced the clamour—but the uproar was not sustained. Sir Walter bowed again, accompanying the movement with the pathetic and noble words of the doomed gladiator, "*moriturus vos saluto.*"

On the 18th of May he was at Jedburgh, on the occasion of the re-election of his kinsman Harden. Immediately Sir Walter's carriage entered the town, he was met by a fierce torrent of execration, and continued volleys of stones. The women of a mob are always more violent than the men; and the Jedburgh demonstration formed no exception to the general rule. Positively a female brute spat on Sir Walter as he sat in his carriage.

In the autumn before Scott left his country on his last melancholy excursion, he was visited by Wordsworth. A sad spectacle to witness was the poet host. The poet guest gave language to his feelings in a coldly, calmly beautiful sonnet, that neither cost the writer a tear, nor has ever made a reader's pulse vary one beat.

On the 23rd of September, Sir Walter left Abbotsford. On the 28th he reached London, a tottering, infirm old man, though only sixty years old. A king's ship was put at his service, the "Barham," which elegant vessel got under weigh, and took him from his native shores on the 29th of October. But change of scene was to do no good. The excitement of the voyage raised his spirits; he seemed for a time to rally; he entered with zest into society, and at Naples he appeared often at the Neapolitan court in the uniform of a Brigadier-General of the Body Guard of Scotland. He visited Pompeii, the city of the dead—that vast people he was soon to be numbered amongst. He went to Rome; from thence to Frankfort. It was after passing a day on a steamboat on the Rhine, that on resuming his carriage, and passing through unattractive scenery—so depressing a contrast to the banks of the river, that he was seized near Nimeguen with his most severe and ultimately fatal attack of apoplexy.

On the 13th of June he reached London just alive, not having shared the fate of Fielding and Smollett, who went abroad in search of health, and died on foreign soil. At the

St. James's hotel, in Jermyn-street, he lay for three weeks in a state of stupor, now and then broken by passages of intelligence. Great was the sympathy of the world's city. One night, Allen Cunningham on leaving the St. James's hotel, after making his sad inquiries, came upon a knot of workmen at the corner of Jermyn-street. "Do you know, sir," asked one of these artisans, "if this is the street where he is lying?" As if only one man in all wide London were dying!

In all his intervals of consciousness Sir Walter had expressed an earnest desire to be moved to Abbotsford. On the 7th of July, in compliance with his wish, he was moved from Jermyn-street to a steam boat, and was conveyed to his native city in a state of almost unbroken stupor. From Edinburgh he was taken in his carriage to his beloved seat. As he entered the old, old scenes, his mind awoke, and when the towers of Abbotsford broke upon his view, so ungovernable was his delight, that he could scarce be restrained from leaping from the carriage. Again he was at home. And for a few short days he gave signs of decided amendment. He was wheeled through his rooms, he was taken into the gardens, and gazed with tranquil happiness on the fair castle he had built, and he spoke with touching tenderness to his servants. Many were the pathetic incidents of these last days. He asked on one occasion to have a book read to him, and on being asked which book? he answered solemnly: "Need you ask me? There is but one." Whereupon his good son-in-law read him the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel. Another day he asked to have some Crabbe read to him, and he listened to the description of the arrival of the players in the borough with intense pleasure, but he regarded the poem as a new publication, and especially calculated to wound the feelings of his old friend Terry—already dead. When Lockhart had read the lines:—

Sad happy race ! soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest :
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain.
Not warned by misery, nor enriched by gain.

Sir Walter cried, "Shut the book—I can't stand more of this—it will touch Terry to the very quick."

On another occasion he insisted on being taken to his desk to write. But when his request had been complied with, when he had been wheeled to his writing-table, and his daughter Sophia put a pen into his hands, the quill fell from his paralysed fingers, and dropped upon the paper. He burst into tears. Sleep succeeded to the paroxysm of grief. But when he awoke, it was to remember all that had occurred; and, raising himself in his chair, he said with a pathetic burst of his ancient grandeur, "Friends, don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."

Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, died at half-past one, p.m., on the 21st of September, 1832, aged sixty-one years. He was buried amongst the ashes of his ancestors in Dryburgh Abbey.

Although Scott died at no very advanced age, he lived long enough to find himself stripped of a large number of his most valued companions, and of those friends who mourned his loss a large number quickly followed him. Scott's affairs immediately after his death were in the following state: Of the Ballantyne debt £54,000 remained; he had also a private debt of £10,000, secured by mortgage on the lands of Abbotsford. Against this, on the credit side, must be placed £22,000 life insurance, the author's property in the copyrights of his works, and the library, museum, and furniture of Abbotsford, presented to him by his creditors, as a testimonial of respect and gratitude. His children were sufficiently provided for by the property (about £30,000) of their maternal uncle. Sir Walter the Second had

married an heiress; Charles had obtained diplomatic employment from the Government; and Anne Scott received during her life a pension of £200 per annum, from the privy purse of King William the Fourth. The children piously combined to accomplish without delay that for which Scott had so long striven. They borrowed £30,000 of Mr. Cadell, and applied that sum, and the product of the life-insurance to wiping out the remainder of the Ballantyne debt. In the course of time, as the public are well aware, the sale of Scott's works not only repaid Mr. Cadell the £30,000, but conferred substantial wealth on the author's representatives.

Scott's will bequeathed the Abbotsford library, museum, &c., to his eldest son, burdened with a debt of £5,000, to be divided equally between the testator's younger children. The produce of his literary property he devoted, by the testament, first to the payment of the Ballantyne debt, then to the extinction of the mortgage on Abbotsford,—the residue to be divided equally between the survivors of his family. Before leaving these money-statements, we may mention that one of the most pathetic, and merciful, of the delusions of the last year or more of Scott's earthly existence was a belief that he had liquidated all his debts.

Scott was not to be gratified in his darling whim,—he was not to found a family. No descendant from him in the male line lives. The title is extinct. How awful in its deep, eloquent, tranquillity, is the silence with which nature rebukes the petty aspirations of man, and teaches us where immortal and unfading joy alone can be found. Sir Walter's sons are dead, and have left no children, but his *works* remain, and shall live for ever!

It is difficult to form a correct estimate of Sir Walter Scott. *The man* was a mass of contradictions; *the writer*, incalculably great, though his achievements too often provoke censure. In politics he was a narrow bigot of a party whose principles were prejudices, and whose zeal was a jealous hate of all opponents; yet he was a benevolent and

philanthropic man. History was the study he especially cultivated, but he persisted in reading it only one way—that, namely, which accorded with the sentiments which he had imbibed in the nursery from ballads and border legends. Even when he was compelled to surrender his dogmas before an array of facts, he had not the courage to silence the whisperings of old associations of thought, and boldly to declare the truth. He declined to write a biography of Queen Mary of Scotland, “*because his opinion was contrary to his feelings.*” What a striking form of intellectual cowardice and dishonesty! and yet he was truthful, and of a high courage! Ere he lisped, he was a Jacobite; and when he became the enthusiastic worshipper of George the Fourth, he salved the wounds of his politico-romantic faith by continual assertions, that that monarch acquired a title, *de jure*, on the death of the pitiable Cardinal of York. Such a man of course never learnt the great lessons of the past. He was an antiquarian, so far as his imagination would allow him to be; war songs, stories of the feuds, olden ruins, armour, mediæval architecture, costumes, social customs,—with all these he had an uncommon acquaintance; but he was as much at fault when describing the life, the vital needs, and the longings of the remote ages in which he placed the scenes of many of his novels, as he was when he discussed the character and tendency of the French in Paul’s Letters, and “The Life of Napoleon,” or when he poured forth Tory jargon for the last time, on the Jedburgh hustings. He was widely, but not well read; and he often acknowledged it with grief. Of judgment, the logical faculty, the capacity of mastering a wide range of thought, and the power of following out a chain of reasoning to its end, he was utterly devoid. He was a superficial thinker; and though he was endowed with an ever active imagination, a lively brain, and a more than common share of nervous irritability, he altogether lacked earnestness of thought.

It can with justice be said of Sir Walter,—and it is a grave thing to say of a foremost writer of any age,—that none of his works teach the strong man anything. From youth to old age, his pen addressed nearly every thinking mind of Europe, and yet nowhere in his almost countless pages is there a sign he partook of the innermost sentiments, or detected the purpose of the times his genius fascinated. In his poems, novels, histories, and treatises, we are by turns charmed with rich imagery, graceful descriptions, dramatic beauties of position and language, and inexhaustible humour. We laugh, smile, weep, are warlike, ferocious, magnanimous, merciful. At every mutation of the wit, and every new manifestation of artistic felicity in those varied productions we experience a thrill of sympathy. But all these countless emotions are fairly to be classed amongst feelings of amusement. And to amuse was all that Scott aimed at. Byron was uttering cries of anguish. Shelley was nerving himself for higher flights of thought. Scott saw his vocation, and right perseveringly he worked it out. His work was to amuse, and before him no man had performed that task so successfully. The art with which he achieved his object was all but perfect. No wonder that the simple regarded his skill as superhuman; and that the most profound and polished men of letters gave utterance to the extremes of wonder and delight.

It has often been observed, that Scott wrote too fast for his reputation, that if he had written less he would have written better, that if practising the arts of amusement had been less profitable, he would have been our instructor as well as our pleasant friend. In this judgment we do not concur. We believe that he did his best, and that if he had had the capability of accomplishing greater things, the lure of gain and the pride of the eye would never have kept him to the humbler toil. There was nothing of the philosopher in him. He was a man of honor, and what in

Scotland was regarded as a decently God-fearing man, although a novel-writer, but he cared nothing for truth, immutable and everlasting, and he never passed through a fit of religious fervour,—his zeal was all for the Tory party, there was none of it for the Lord of Hosts. He cherished an amiable good-will to the bodies of his fellow creatures, but cared not a rush for their souls. His art, perfect master as he was of it, was to him eventually a trade; and when hard up for money he did not hesitate to push bad goods upon the market.

But Sir Walter's influence on our fictitious literature will never disappear. He taught us *how* to tell those exquisite stories which now roll forth year by year, in hundreds, from the presses, and will be a marvel to after ages. The ease and strength of the modern novel came from him. He showed writers how to construct plots devoid of the cumbrous machinery of "Tom Jones," how to develop the graphic force of Defoe and to keep free from his twaddle, and how to put on paper a brilliant passage of repartee without the manifest effort of Sterne. He lived to see better novelists than himself in the field (and he had the noble-mindedness to acknowledge their excellence), but he had the satisfaction of observing that whatever new melodies and combinations of sound they produced it was his instruments they used.

Besides having so enriched literary art, Sir Walter conferred another benefit on his profession, which authors ought to be grateful for. His unprecedented success, both as respects his pecuniary acquisitions and the flattering distinctions of society, has had an appreciable influence on the popular estimation of the literary profession. The Castle of Abbotsford—"Scott's Folly"—the carriages-and-four, the long retinue of servants, the mimicry of feudal grandeur, wiped out the vile stains which Pope had affixed to the vocation of authorship. A young man of great mental endowments was henceforth not to be sneered at for de-

voting his talents to inkshed, for by so doing he might—glorious result!—arrive at a baronetcy and ten thousand a-year!

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S
WORKS.

1.	Translations from Bürger, Vol. I.	-	1796	Ætat 25
2.	Goetze Von Berlichingen (Goethe), Translation, Vol. I.	-	1799	„ 28
3.	The House of Aspen, a Tragedy	-	„	„ 28
4.	Ballad of Glenfinlas	-	„	„ 28
5.	„ Eve of St. John	-	„	„ 28
6.	„ The Grey Brothers	-	„	„ 28
[7.	„ The Fire King, from the German	-	„	„ 28
8.	Minstrels of the Scottish Border, Vols. I. and II.		1802	„ 31
9.	„ „ „ Vol. III.		1803	„ 32
10.	Review of Southey's Amadis of Gaul		„	„ 32
11.	„ Sibbald's Chronicle of Eng- lish Poetry	-	„	„ 32
12.	„ Godwin's Life of Chaucer		„	„ 32
13.	„ Ellis's Ancient English Poetry	-	„	„ 32
14.	„ Life and Works of Chat- terton	-	„	„ 32
15.	Sir Tristrem, the Metrical Romance of		1804	„ 33
16.	The Lay of the Last Minstrel	-	1805	„ 34
17.	Review of Todd's Edition of Spenser		„	„ 34
18.	„ Godwin's Fleetwood	-	„	„ 34
19.	„ Report concerning Ossian		„	„ 34
20.	„ Johnes' Translation of Froissart	-	„	„ 34
21.	„ Colonel Thornton's Sport- ing Tour	-	„	„ 34

22.	Review of Works on Cookery	-	1805	Ætat	34
23.	Song, The Bard's Incantation	-	"	"	34
24.	Review of Herbert's Poems and Translations	- -	1806	"	35
25.	" Selections of Metrical Ro- mances	- -	"	"	35
26.	" The Miseries of Human Life	- -	"	"	35
27.	Ballads and Lyrical Pieces, 8vo.	-	"	"	35
28.	Sir H. Slingsby's and Capt. Hodgson's Memoirs, with Notes, 8vo.	-	"	"	35
29.	Marmion	- - -	1808	"	37
30.	Life and Works of Dryden, with Notes, 18 vols.	- -	"	"	37
31.	Strutt's Queenhoo Hall (Ed.)	-	"	"	37
32.	Capt. Geo. Carleton's Memoirs (Ed.)	-	"	"	37
33.	Sir Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth's Memoirs	- - -	"	"	37
34.	Somer's Collection of Tracts, 13 vols. (completed 1812)	- -	1809	"	38
35.	Review of Cromek's Reliques of Burns	-	"	"	38
36.	" Southey's Chronicle of the Cid	- -	"	"	38
37.	" Sir John Carr's Tour in Scotland	- -	"	"	38
38.	Sir Ralph Sadler's Life, Letters, and State Papers, 3 vols.	- -	"	"	38
39.	English Minstrelsy, 2 vols.	- -	1810	"	39
40.	The Lady of the Lake	- -	"	"	39
41.	Miss Seward's Life and Poetical Works	- -	"	"	39
42.	Essay on Scottish Judicature	-	"	"	39
43.	Vision of Don Roderick	- -	1811	"	40
44.	Imitations: The Inferno of Altes- dora: The Poachers: The Resolve	-	"	"	40

45.	Secret History of the Court of King James I.	-	-	-	1811	Ætat	40
46.	Rokeby	-	-	-	1812	„	41
47.	The Bridal of Triermain	-	-	-	1813	„	42
48.	Account of Eyrbyggia Saga	-	-	-	1814	„	43
49.	Life and Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D. 19 vols.	-	-	-	„	„	43
50.	Waverley	-	-	-	„	„	43
51.	Essay on Chivalry	-	-	-	„	„	43
52.	„ The Drama	-	-	-	„	„	43
53.	Memorie of the Somervilles	-	-	-	„	„	43
54.	Rowlands "The letting of humours blood in the head vaine,"	-	-	-	„	„	43
55.	The Lord of the Isles	-	-	-	1815	„	44
56.	Guy Mannering	-	-	-	„	„	44
57.	The Field of Waterloo	-	-	-	„	„	44
58.	Song "On lifting up the Banner"	-	-	-	„	„	44
59.	Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk	-	-	-	1816	„	45
60.	The Antiquary	-	-	-	„	„	45
61.	Edin: Ann: Register, Historical Department	-	-	-	„	„	45
62.	Tales of my Landlord, 1st Series; The Black Dwarf and Old Mortality	-	-	-	„	„	45
63.	Harold the Dauntless	-	-	-	1817	„	46
64.	The Sultan of Serendio	-	-	-	„	„	46
65.	Kemble's Farewell Address	-	-	-	„	„	46
66.	Edin: Ann: Register:—Historical Department	-	-	-	„	„	46
67.	Introduction to "The Border Antiquities"	-	-	-	„	„	46
68.	Song, "The Sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill"	-	-	-	„	„	46
69.	Rob Roy	-	-	-	„	„	46
70.	Account of the Scottish Regalia	-	-	-	1818	„	47
71.	Review of Kirkton's Church History	-	-	-	„	„	47
72.	„ Shelley's 'Frankenstein'	-	-	-	„	„	47

73. Ballad, "The Battle of Sempach" -	1818	Ætat	47
74. Tales of my Landlord, Second Series, The Heart of Mid-Lothian -	"	"	47
75. Review of Gourgaud's Narrative -	"	"	47
76. „ of Maturin's "Women; or, Pour et Contre" -	"	"	47
77. „ of Childe Harold, Canto iv -	"	"	47
78. Article for Jamieson's edition of Cap- tain Burt's Letters -	"	"	47
79. Provincial Antiquities of Scotland -	"	"	47
80. Ballad of "The Noble Moringer" -	1819	"	48
81. Sketch of the character of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch -	"	"	48
82. Tales of my Landlord, third series, The Bride of Lammermoor, and Legend of Montrose -	"	"	48
83. Memorials of the Haliburtons -	"	"	48
84. Patrick Carey's Trivial Poems and Triolets -	"	"	48
85. Ivanhoe -	"	"	48
86. The Visionary -	1820	"	49
87. The Monastery -	"	"	49
88. The Abbot -	"	"	49
89. Lives of the Novelists -	"	"	49
90. Kenilworth -	1821	"	50
91. Account of the Coronation of George IV. -	"	"	50
92. Franck's Northern Memoirs—the Contemplative Angler -	"	"	50
93. Chronological Notes of Scottish Af- fairs, 1680 — 1701, from Lord Fountainhall's Diary -	"	"	50
94. The Pirate -	"	"	50
95. Gwynne's Memoirs of the Civil Wars -	1822	"	51

96. Halidon Hill	- - -	1822	Ætat	51
97. Macduff's Cross	- - -	"	"	51
98. The Fortunes of Nigel	- - -	"	"	51
99. Poetry contained in the Waverley				
Novels	- - -	"	"	51
100. Peveril of the Peak	- - -	1823	"	52
101. Quentin Durward	- - -	"	"	52
102. Essay on Romance	- - -	"	"	52
103. St. Ronan's Well	- - -	"	"	52
104. Red Gauntlet	- - -	1824	"	53
105. Tribute to the Memory of Lord				
Byron	- - -	"	"	53
106. Tales of the Crusaders: The Be-				
trothed, The Talisman	- - -	1825	"	54
107. Introduction and Notes to the				
Memoirs of Madame Larocheja-				
quelin	- - -	"	"	54
108. Review of Pepys' Diary	- - -	"	"	54
109. Letters of Malachi Malagrowther	- - -	1826	"	55
110. Woodstock	- - -	"	"	55
111. Review of the Life of J. P. Kem-				
ble and Kelly's Reminiscences	- - -	"	"	55
112. " Galt's Omen	- - -	"	"	55
113. Review of Mackenzie's Life and				
Works of John Home	- - -	1827	"	56
114. " of Hoffman's Novels	- - -	"	"	56
115. Life of Napoleon Buonaparte	- - -	"	"	56
116. Chronicles of the Canongate, 1st				
series: The Two Drovers: The				
Highland Widow: The Surgeon's				
Daughter	- - -	"	"	56
117. Essay on the Planting of Waste				
Lands	- - -	"	"	56
118. Reply to General Gourgaud	- - -	"	"	56
119. Essay on Ornamental Gardening	- - -	"	"	56

120. Memoir of George Bannatyne	-	1827	Ætat	56
121. Tales of a Grandfather, First Series	-	„	„	56
122. Essay on Molière	- - -	1828	„	57
123. Two Religious Discourses	- - -	„	„	57
124. The Chronicles of Canongate, 2nd Series, The Fair Maid of Perth	- - -	„	„	57
125. Tales of a Grandfather, 2nd Series	-	„	„	57
126. Review of Hajji Baba in England	-	„	„	57
127. „ Sir Humphry Davy's Salmonia	- - - -	„	„	57
128. Anne of Gierstein	- - -	1829	„	58
129. History of Scotland for Lardner's Cyclopædia	- - -	„	„	58
130. Tales of a Grandfather, 3rd Series	-	„	„	58
131. Review of Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials	- - -	1830	„	59
132. The Doom of Devergoil and Auchindrane	- - - -	„	„	59
133. Essays on Ballad Poetry	- - -	„	„	59
134. Letter on Demonology and Witchcraft, for Murray's Family Library	- - -	„	„	59
135. Tales of a Grandfather, 4th Series, History of France	- - -	„	„	59
136. History of Scotland, Vol. II. for Lardner's Cyclopædia	- - -	„	„	59
137. Review of Southey's Life of John Bunyan	- - - -	„	„	59
138. Tales of my Landlord, 4th Series: Count Robert of Paris, and Castle Dangerous	- - -	1831	„	60

CHAPTER V.

JANE AUSTEN.

THE novels of Miss Austen are now but little read, and even when read gain few sincere admirers, notwithstanding that it is now the fashion indiscriminately to praise them. They are however amongst the best specimens of one department of the fictitious art in literature, and will, we doubt not, be much studied five hundred years hence by scholars anxious to obtain a true insight into the family life, and form a correct estimate, of the simple, gently-bred women, of the nineteenth century. For ourselves we do not hesitate to confess that the novels of Miss Austen, and all the best female writers, have a peculiar charm for us, and that we never rise from a perusal of their works without some new information concerning the human nature they delineate, or the structure of the feminine intellect, and taste, and morality, as shown by the views they take of life, and the aspirations they cherish. Certainly no man can be said to understand the heart of woman, or to be educated for its conquest, who has not studied it in the imaginative productions of female writers. From them we learn what it is they most admire in the manly character, or rather what they wish and believe the manly character to be; and so we are instructed how to flatter, feign, and win.

On the 16th of December 1775, Jane Austen was born at Steventon, in Hampshire. Her father was rector of that parish for upwards of forty years; but when he arrived at the advanced age of three-score and ten he quitted his flock, and resided for the last four years of his life at Bath. On his death his widow with Jane and another daughter, moved to Southampton, where they resided for a short time, and thence migrated to Chawton, a pleasant village in the same

county. It was at Chawton that Jane Austen wrote, or published, the novels which she sent forth to the world, during her life. "Sense and Sensibility" came first, and was followed by "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," and "Emma." Two more novels from her pen were published after her death, under the titles of "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion." "Northanger Abbey" was the first novel she ever composed, and, as she well knew, was merely the awkward production of those efforts which won for her the secret of her art. She did well in keeping the manuscript in her desk, away from public observation, as nothing more or less than the exercise book of her school days; and her literary executor would have acted wisely had he followed her example. It may be here stated that this "first work" was actually sold to a publisher in 1803, and advertised as about to appear, when the man of business feared to venture his capital in printing such a poor tale, and restored the manuscript to its author. This was a rather unpleasant way to inform a lady of the worthlessness of her performance.

Stung to renewed exertions, rather than disheartened by this rebuff, Miss Austen wrote "Sense and Sensibility." When she committed it to the press her heart misgave her, and the best fate she dared to hope for it was that it might fall dead at its birth, unnoticed by the condemnation and ridicule of the journals. It appeared incredible to her, when she was informed that its sale had resulted in a clear profit of £150. This was indeed good news to her, for she had been so rash as to publish it at her own pecuniary risk.

Jane Austen's life was an uneventful, and, it would seem from the little that is known about it, an unhappy one. She was singularly gifted in person as well as in mind; her figure was remarkably elegant; her face was endowed with good features, a fascinating expression of simplicity and

benevolence, and a peculiarly brilliant complexion ; her voice was very sweet ; she was for her day highly accomplished, and excelled in dancing ; and the amiability of her noble disposition was a fountain of happiness to all who surrounded her ; and yet she never married. That she never loved, is not to be believed !

Originally delicate, and of a consumptive tendency, her health failed her in the commencement of 1816. From that date the advances of her pulmonary disease were steady, though for some months—tardy. In the May of 1817, she moved to Winchester for the sake of medical aid, and there her sufferings closed, after a residence in that city of two short months.

To the last she was affectionate and cheerful, as she had ever been ; solemnly preparing herself for the change that was at hand, and at the same time alive to the pure affections of her past life. On the day preceding her death, she was engaged in the composition of poetry.

During the course of the next four-and-twenty hours she sank rapidly. As she lay in the arms of her sister, she was asked with tender, perhaps officious love, if she wanted anything. With her last words she replied “I want nothing but death.” And Death soon came to her—on Friday, the 18th of July, 1817. Her age was then forty-two.

In her novels she attempted, and successfully, to paint the quiet home-life of the educated people amongst whom her lot was cast. To many readers such a subject is distasteful ; those who require in a work of fiction a brisk succession of seductions and murders, peppered with withering sarcasms, and softened down by passages of overstrained sentimentality, will find little amusement in watching the artless schemings and unobtrusive virtues of Miss Austen’s ladies, the sober actions of her good men, and the commonplace, unattractive failings of her bad ones. They will find nothing in the way of striking positions in her books ; and

in their mortification at not being startled and "horror-struck," they will fail to detect the art of the authoress who, in her delineations of character and society, bores them with painting life "just as every one knows it is."

Wiser and more intelligent minds than such readers have, however, paid Miss Austen's merits due homage. Archbishop Whateley, in one of the Quarterly Reviews of 1821, expressed his admiration for her powers. And Sir Walter Scott, after reading "Pride and Prejudice" for the third time, wrote of her in his private diary: "That young lady had a talent for describing the involvement, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful thing I ever met with. The big *bowwow* strain I can myself do, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!" Probably Sir Walter was under some mistake as to "that young lady's" age.

CHAPTER VI.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

IN the history of the literature of England, as indeed of every other civilized country, there stand out numerous writers in whom were united wealth, aristocratic descent, and genius of the highest order. Lord Bacon and Lord Byron are only two out of a long list of illustrious names which can be mentioned in proof that opulence, patrician birth, and indulgence in patrician pleasures are not incompatible with rare mental prowess, and sustained intellectual exertion. Besides these master minds, and to be classed with them, only because the possession of fortune suggests the association, the superior classes of English society can claim as their own a host of comparatively insignificant authors who not unwisely attempted to dignify their rank by literary endeavour, and who, in many cases, succeeded in achieving a celebrity in the profession of letters, which they would never have attained to unaided by social position. Of this latter fraternity, Matthew Gregory Lewis, notorious as "Monk Lewis," may be regarded as a good specimen.

On the 9th of July, A.D., 1775, Matthew Gregory Lewis entered this world as the eldest son of a certain Mr. Lewis, who, besides boasting descent from an ancient family, (which most men do), was possessed of a good landed estate in England, a large property in the West Indies, and the lucrative post of Deputy-Secretary at War. Mrs. Lewis (Matthew's mother) was Frances Maria, the youngest daughter of the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Sewell,

Bart., Master of the Rolls, in the reign of George the Third. She was a celebrated beauty in her time, and was much admired at court. Not only was she mistress of *all* the feminine accomplishments of the day, but she so excelled in dancing the minuet, that Her Majesty Queen Charlotte complimented her on her graceful movements! Her girlish beauty even warmed the sluggish heart of George the Third, for on the occasion of her presentation at "her first drawing room," when in her confusion she forgot the customary etiquette of bending her knee to her King, he with "that benevolent good humour," says history, "for which he was remarkable," endeavoured to conceal her blunder by impressing a kiss upon her blushing cheek; all things considered, not a bad line of conduct to pursue towards a pretty girl.

The lovely Frances was not destined to experience a happy married life, for after becoming the mother of four children she left her husband's roof, and never re-entered it. The cause of the separation, time has enveloped in mystery; but as decent members of society we are bound to believe that all the fault was with the husband.

Matthew Lewis's childhood does not appear to have been especially interesting. When quite a little boy, he was educated at the preparatory school of the Rev. Dr. Fountaine, from whose care he was taken after a few years, and was placed in the Westminster School, where he remained till at the ripe age of sixteen years, when he commenced residence as an under graduate at Christ Church, Oxford.

Whatever indiscretions Mrs. Lewis had been guilty of, or whatever unkindness Mr. Lewis had exhibited to her, Matthew behaved with exquisite delicacy and nice courage towards both, never failing in respectful attention to his father, and at all times consoling his mother, in her sorrows, by his love and tender care. Even at this early age he practised systematic economy, in order that he might send

the savings from his pocket money to her, who, although she had a handsome maintenance from her husband, was in continual pecuniary difficulties; and as long as he lived, she was the partner of his secrets, and the sharer of his good fortunes. "The little presents," writes the boy from Oxford to his mother, "I have occasionally made you, have been merely what I have either spared from my pocket-money, or by fortunate success at play, (which, however, I use but seldom,) and have been enabled to dispose of in the manner which was most agreeable to me."

His residence at Oxford was not of long duration, and during the brief period of his student career in that University, he missed no opportunity of breaking away for a foreign trip. In the September of 1792 he was in Paris, and at the conclusion of the same year he was off to Weimar, where he acquired a respectable knowledge of the German language, and was introduced to Goethe. The life at Weimar astonished him in many ways, and the impressions it made on him were duly chronicled for his mother's enjoyment. "I continue to be well enough contented with this town. There are some things, to be sure, which are not quite so elegant and well-ordered as in England; for instance, the knives and forks are never changed, even at the Duke's table; and the ladies hawk and spit about the room in a manner the most disgusting. But, as the duchesses are very affable, and every-body is extremely obliging, I put up with everything else, and upon the whole, amuse myself tolerably well." During 1793, he returned to England, made an excursion into Scotland, visiting Bothwell Castle, the seat of Lord Douglas, and Dalkeith, a seat of the Duke of Buccleuch, and once again kept a term at Christ Church. In 1794 he quitted Oxford for good, and in the summer of that year proceeded to the Hague, and there became an attaché to the British embassy—a post which he retained until the end of the year. While

at the Hague he made an excursion to the head-quarters of the army, arriving at Arnheim two days before the evacuation of Nimeguen, and witnessing the bombardment of the bridge. This expedition was not unattended with danger to the curious enquirer, for he was standing in a house in the small village of Lent, when a cannon ball from Nimeguen passed through the roof and knocked the tiles about his ears. "The French," he wrote, "are adored wherever they go, while the allied forces are execrated and detested. In truth, I am sorry to confess that no ravages more wanton and unjustifiable were ever committed in the annals of war, than have been perpetrated by all the combined army, more particularly by the English."

From early boyhood Lewis had been ambitious of literary reputation, and perseveringly laboured on works that were never made public. In 1792, when he was sixteen years of age, he wrote a farce, "The Epistolary Intrigue," and a portion of a novel, "*The Effusion of Sensibility*," which never saw the light. And while at Weimar he completed a volume of poems which, with the simple confidence of a young author, he had "no doubt of selling," but which the publishers it soon appeared did not care to purchase. From his work on these failures he acquired a certain facility of composition—and that was something. One of his more juvenile compositions, however, a comedy, "The East Indian," which was written in his seventeenth year, Mrs. Jordan accepted, and after some delay put upon the stage for her benefit. It was acted again in 1799 for Mrs. Powell's benefit, and in the following year obtained more than ordinary success at Drury Lane.

But many as were the fruitless attempts in literature made by the ambitious boy, he had not yet arrived at man's estate when his pen produced that notorious fiction, which gave him the unenviable name and reputation of "Monk Lewis." From the Hague, in Sept. 23, 1794, he wrote to

his mother—" . . . They say that practice makes perfect ; if so, I shall one day be a perfect author, for I practise most furiously. What do you think of my having written, in the space of ten weeks, a romance of between three and four hundred pages octavo ? I have even written out half of it fair. It is called "The Monk," and I am myself so much pleased with it that, if the booksellers will not buy it, I shall publish it myself." The Romance, thus hastily written, was drawn from half-a-dozen sources distinct from the author's brain :—Ambrosio's (the *Monk's*) story was taken from that of *Santon Barissa* in the *Guardian* ; *The Devil in Love*, by Canzotte, suggested the form of the temptation the monk is subjected to ; the catastrophe was stolen from *the Sorcerer* ; the ' bleeding nun,' was a popular German tale ; and Smollett and Mrs. Radcliffe were unblushingly pilfered from. The structure of the fiction is almost as clumsy as the manner in which the writer became possessed of the raw materials was dishonest. Of its want of artistic power some judgment may be formed from the fact that of its 834 pages no less than 185 are devoted to "the history of Don Raymond,"—a narrative burdened with the prolix style customary to such *historical digressions* in Fielding, Smollett, and the earlier novelists. But what "The Monk" lacked in talent, it made up in immorality. The scenes between the hero, Ambrosio, and the ladies by whom he is fascinated, are worked up with a fervour of grossness that almost surpasses the prurient morality of *Pamela*, and has never been equalled by the author of "the *Mysteries of London*." Had the tale been left to itself, it might perhaps have shocked even the coarseness of the coarse age in which it appeared, but some pious people thought right to condemn it—and forthwith its popularity was ensured. Society was scandalized,—and called for another edition ; virtuous ladies never read it, and yet knew all about it, as is too frequently the case now-a-days, with Don

Juan ; and the Attorney-General, instructed by one of the societies for the suppression of vice, moved for an injunction to restrain its sale, and obtained a rule *nisi*,—but the rule was never made absolute, and the legal proceedings were discontinued.

It would appear that the youthful author was deeply mortified at the censures passed on his work by all decent people, for in the second edition he struck out many of the most objectionable passages, but even thus purified it deserves no milder name than a disreputable publication. He also wrote a long letter to his father, declaring the goodness of his intention, and exclaiming against the injustice of those who attacked him. And perhaps it is not too much to ask of charity, to credit his assertions of his innocence of design, for, as he pleads, "*twenty* is not the age at which prudence is most to be expected."

But how great soever was the horror created amongst the good by "The Monk," it did not induce the *beau monde* of English society to look coldly on Lewis, who immediately became a celebrity of the highest fashion, and under the name of *Monk* Lewis (a name he never lost) was cordially invited into the most exclusive circles. Everyone talked about him, and sometimes, without knowing it, in his presence.

One evening at a large party a lady, a stranger to him, said, "Have you read this strange new work, called 'The Monk?'"

"Really, madam," was Lewis's answer, "I don't think I should have patience to do so."

"* * Well, really the author must be a most extraordinary—a wonderful man ; I should like so much to be in his company ! Confess, now, shouldn't you ?"

"Why, as to that, madam, I rather think I should find his company a bore."

After saying this, Lewis was not a little amused by seve-

ral by-standers, who informed him that they were intimate friends of the celebrated author.

As soon as Lewis became of age he entered parliament as member for Hindon, in Wiltshire, in the place of Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill Abbey; and then settling in an elegant little cottage, in Barnes, surrounded himself with a profusion of good miniatures, books, and articles of *bijouterie*, and some of the most desirable acquaintances London had to offer him. His expenses were all laid on a moderate scale, for he always managed to keep tolerably well within the income of £1,000 per annum, allowed him by his father, and yet persevered in pecuniary kindness to his mother. This cottage he never gave up, though he afterwards had apartments in the Albany, furnished in a like tasteful and fanciful style. In this modest residence he entertained such guests as Sir Walter Scott, Moore, Byron, Shelley, Earl Grey, Lord Melbourne, Lord Holland, and at least on one occasion the Duchess of York.

Lewis's personal appearance was not prepossessing. He describes himself as

“Of passions strong, of hasty nature,
Of graceless form, and dwarfish stature.”

He had, moreover, large grey eyes, thick features, and an inexpressive countenance. When he talked he had an insufferable habit of drawing the fore-finger of his right hand across his eyelid, and in conversation he was guilty of the absurd affectation of a drawling tone such as was popular with dandies. According to Walter Scott “Mat had queerish eyes, they projected like those of some insects, and were flat-tish on the orbit. His person was extremely small and boyish; he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. I remember a picture of him by Saunders being handed round at Dalkeith House. The artist had ingeniously flung a dark folding mantle around

the form, under which was half-hid a dagger, a dark lantern, or some such cut-throat appurtenance; with all this the features were preserved and ennobled." The Duke of Buccleuch exclaimed when he saw this picture, "Like Mat Lewis! Why that picture's like a man!"

Shall we pay a visit to this little boy-man at Barnes? It is the day on which her Royal Highness the Duchess of York has ordered him to entertain her at a *déjeuner à la fourchette*. Come, we are particular friends; let us enter the garden, and surprise the poet before any-one has arrived.

On the lawn before the front window of the cottage are two bronze statues. One is of Cupid just about to fly from a pedestal on which are inscribed the following lines of Lewis's own make:—

"Though Age intrude, with frown repelling,
Love, while I live, shall share my dwelling:
'Begone, vain boy!' should stoics cry,
Just spread your wings—but never fly."

The other statue is of Fortune, who holds a purse in her hand, and stands upon a globe. On the pedestal beneath her is the following inscription—also of Lewis's composition:

"Lo! in my hand a purse of gold,
And at my feet the world behold;
For they whom fortune's favours greet,
Still find the world is at their feet."

In the distance are tents beneath which *the déjeuner* is to be served (as it ought to be). But never mind them now. Let us pass on to that shrubbery under cover of which the Monk has been watching us for the last five minutes. Ah! by this turn of the path we are in his presence, and he starts back as if we have come upon him unawares.

"Holla! here we are and in time enough we hope."

"You're strange fellows," says he kindly.

His greeting is concluded ; and in another instant he is bending in melancholy abstraction over a bed of flowers. A gust of wind sweeps a blossom to his feet ; he picks it up, and as his eyes fill with tears he says in a voice of the deepest emotion, " See, it is still in the pride of its bloom ; the hues are yet fresh, the dew on it is yet bright, and thus, for a time, it will remain. Still it is broken ! "

" Come, wont you like to see my preparations ? ". resumes the Monk, rousing himself from his grief.

We assent, and follow him into the principal room of the cottage, and there, seated amongst flowers and books and pictures, look out through the windows at the bronze Cupid on the lawn.

The Monk follows our gaze, and with an attempt to be sprightly, observes, " Cupid exhibits so much bronze, because his votary owns so little marble, I suppose ? "

But this forced merriment will not do ; and again the poor fellow's head droops, and he sighs deeply.

" Come, look at Fortune," we respond cheerfully, turning our eyes to the other statue,— " she will tell a better tale. "

Our friend obeys, shifts his gaze, looks at Fortune, pauses, and then in a hollow voice replies, " Her favoured ones prove often more blind than herself ; hands may grasp yon all-coveted purse—and its enjoyment will slip through the fingers ! "

Tears rapidly pursued each other down the speaker's little face.

———— But the guests have arrived. The *déjeûner* has been duly destroyed, and here we are amidst a brilliant company of the noble and beautiful listening to undeniably good music. The good-natured little Duchess of York is sitting on a lounge, with Minny—Lewis's favourite cat—nestling in the skirt of her royal drapery. The lovely Lady Charlotte Campbell is singing a Scotch ballad with simple pathos.

The music ceases, and her royal highness, reproving some officious person anxious to remove the cat from the royal vicinity, breaks forth, "No, no; you shall not disturb her now. Poor little ting! I do tink she love me; and—do, do not take from me any ting dat love me."

"Your royal highness is partial to all animals, I believe," observes a lady near her.

"Ah! mien Got! yes, matam, dey are so dependent on us for kindness and protection; and when dey make dere appeal in dere innocent language, I tink we ought love dem if only for awaken de better part of our nature. Besides, dey are grateful for kindness, dey are sincere, dey are honest."

"Nay, nay, pardon me, madam," interposes the poet cheerfully, "since, with regard to the latter quality, I am sorry to say, I could not feel justified in being answerable for Minette, if she chanced to spy that custard."

The duchess laughs. "Poor ting, poor little ting! dat is but dere nature. De dog, de cat, dey will snap and dey will bite; but how would I punish de poor ignorant ting, dat av no liberty of choice? I av many dog, as you know, but though I vos delight in de attachment and de faith of my dog, I could not say de dog is *virtuous*—still, I welcome *de sweet spirit of affection*—dat it is win my regard. Ah! Master Lewise, me know dat de poor animal follow but dere nature; and would Got dat man so truly follow his: for *his* nature is divine!"

That the reader may not think the above scene overdrawn, it should be stated that it is taken almost verbatim from the account of an eye-witness. Indeed, Matthew was intensely sentimental, his tears flowing scarcely less readily than Yorick's. On the occasion of a large dinner-party at Oatlands, as the ladies were leaving the dining-room, the Duchess of York made some kindly remark in an under tone to him, which condescension and benignity on



the part of his royal hostess so affected him, that his eyes immediately became suffused with drops of emotion.

"What is the matter, man?" was the general exclamation of the men, as the door closed on the retreating line.

"Oh," responded Lewis softly, "The Duchess spoke so *very* kindly to me."

"My dear fellow," exclaimed one of the party, "pray don't cry; I dare say she didn't mean it."

Whether such kindness from any person beneath royal degree would have had an equal effect on the sensitive poet may be questioned. Certain it is that he bowed before rank with a slavish homage worthy an upstart from the uneducated of the middle ranks. Even the good-natured Sir Walter Scott wrote of him, "Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or as a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was particularly fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn he had been born a *parvenu* of yesterday, yet he had lived all his life in good society." But his deep respect for the aristocracy did not prevent him from blundering at times against the most august personages. Soon after his first introduction to the Princess of Wales, he favoured her with an elaborate harangue against the artifices which ladies in *those* (!) days had recourse to to heighten their beauty. The poor princess, whose face was covered with a perfect enamel of cosmetic, listened—and by her blushes of rage heightened the colour of the rouge on her cheeks, and repaid the unintended insult by inviting every individual present, with the exception of Lewis, to visit her on a future occasion. The truth was, poor Lewis was very short-sighted, and of course, ambitious as he was of being the glass of fashion, he could not submit to the ridicule of wearing spectacles. Of this defect Byron made good fun. "Being short-sighted, when we used to ride out together near the Brenta in the

twilight in summer, he (Lewis) made me go *before*, to pilot him : I am absent at times, especially towards evening ; and the consequence of this pilotage was some narrow escapes to the Monk on horseback. Once I led him *into* a ditch over which I had passed as usual, forgetting to warn my convoy : once I led him nearly into the river, instead of *on* the *moveable* bridge which *incommodes* passengers ; and twice did we both run against the Diligence, which, being heavy and slow, did communicate less damage than it received to its leaders, who were *terrified* by the charge ; thrice did I lose him in the grey of the gloaming, and was obliged to bring-to to his distant signals of distance and distress :—all the time he went on talking without intermission, for he was a man of many words.” Lewis’s habit of twaddling on about nothing was a sore affliction to Byron, who was of a temperament to be especially annoyed by a prosy companion. In 1813 his lordship wrote in his journal. “ Lewis called. It is a good and good-humoured man, but pestilently prolix and paradoxical and *personal*. If he would but talk half, and reduce his visits to an hour, he would add to his popularity.” And after Lewis’s death, his lordship, in a spirit of reflective tenderness, wrote “ Lewis was a good man, a clever man, but a bore—a damned bore—one may say.”

Of Lewis’s works little can be said in the way of praise, except that they nearly all show just enough intellect to prove them written by what might have been a superior man. They number in all (Dramas, sets of poems, and romances)—not less than twenty-two, beginning with ‘ The Monk ’ which created for him an undeserved popularity, published in the year 1795, and ending with “ Timour the Tartar,” a drama, “ Rich and Poor,” an opera, and a collection of poems, given to the world in 1812. (The Journal of a West Indian Proprietor was published after his death.) Of this numerous progeny so much was taken from German

and other writers, and so much contributed by his friends, that it is difficult to say how much was the genuine production of the reputed author. They are, however, all shaped and coloured by his wild imagination which morbidly delighted in supernatural scenes of revolting horror. Such a master was he of the brutally terrific in scenic effect, that one of his pieces, "The Captive," a monodrama, acted at Covent Garden in 1803, had such a painful effect upon the house, that it was deemed right to withdraw it. Indeed it failed from the very excellence of the author's peculiar power. The ladies in the boxes fainted, shrieked with terror, and were seized with hysteric convulsions. Relating these circumstances Lewis wrote to his mother, "I did not expect that it would succeed; and of course am not disappointed at its failure. The only chance was, whether pity would make the audience weep; but, instead of that a terror threw them into fits; and, of course, there was an end to my monodrama."

The best, because the least offensive, specimen that can be given of Lewis's grave-yard style is a ballad that is as well known and popular as perhaps any one in our language, that of "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene," which is from the fiction of "The Monk." But it gives no just idea of the ferocious dances and savage yells in which he usually exercised his fancy, though many childish hearts have quaked and turned cold at the recital of—

"The worms they crept in, and the worms they crept out,
And sported his eyes and temples about,
While the spectre addressed Imogene."

This love of ghosts and charnel horrors was well attacked in "The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

"Oh! wonder-working Lewis, Monk or Bard,
Who fain wouldst make Parnassus a churchyard
Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!"

Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
 By gibbering spectres hail'd, thy kindred band,
 Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
 To please the females of our modest age,
 All hail, M. P. ! from whose infernal brain
 Thin sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train ;
 At whose command "grim women " throng in crowds,
 And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds ;
 With "small gray men," "wild yagers," and what not,
 To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott ;
 Again, All hail ! if tales like thine may please,
 Saint Luke alone can vanquish the disease.
 Even Satan's self with thee might dread to dwell,
 And in thy skull discern a deeper hell."

But perhaps the best satire for such an offender is such as was poured upon the "Monk" by Horace Smith, in the "Fire and Ale" of the Rejected Addresses. The description of the *Fire King* is quite in Lewis's best style.

"Sure never was skin half so scalding as his !
 When an infant 'twas equally horrid ;
 For the water, when he was baptized, gave a fizz,
 And bubbled and simmered and started off, whizz !
 As soon as it sprinkled his forehead.

"O ! then there was glitter and fire in each eye,
 For two living coals were the symbols ;
 His teeth were calcined, and his tongue was so dry,
 It rattled against them, as though you should try
 To play the piano in thimbles.

"From his nostrils a lava sulphureous flows,
 Which scorches wherever it lingers ;
 A snivelling fellow he's called by his foes,
 For he can't raise his paw up to blow his red nose
 For fear it should blister his fingers.

"His wig is of flames curling over his head,
 Well powder'd with white smoking ashes ;
 He drinks gunpowder tea, melted sugar of lead,
 Cream of tartar, and dines on hot spice gingerbread,
 Which black from the oven he gnashes," &c.

It would appear, however, that Lewis did right in cultivating the horrible in literature, for when he tried to write soberly and thoughtfully he almost always failed, though some of his simpler ballads must unquestionably be excepted from this judgment. Of the stilted and bombastic stuff he composed when in a grave humour, the following extract from his "Lines, written on returning from the Funeral of the Right Honourable C. J. Fox," may be regarded as a fair specimen.

"Illustrious shade ! when at the throne of heaven
Suppliant thou kneel'st, and sue'st to be forgiven ;
While by thy side a dreadful angel stands,
And grasps the volume in his burning hands
Which holds thy faults, (for who from fault is free ?)
With dauntless eye that stern accuser see ;
His voice be thunder—lightning be his look—
Whisper " The Slave Trade "—and he'll close the book !"

But to counterbalance his innumerable faults as a writer, and absurdities as a man of fashion, Lewis had a list of amiable qualities and virtues, such as few only of the very best of mankind can show. To get a glimpse of some of these, we must resume our sketch of his life.

One of the first houses of importance that he visited, after the publication of "The Monk" had made him famous, was Inverary Castle, the ancient seat of the illustrious house of Argyle, and that hospitable palace he was in the habit of visiting (at one time, annually) as long as he lived. Life at the Castle, to judge from his letters to his mother, was in those days rather fast. The dinner was served at eight o'clock, supper at two, and the steadier of the family retired to bed at four o'clock in the morning, leaving the younger and wilder to make a night of it in the billiard room. Tom Sheridan and Mr. Chester were busy with the balls at six o'clock one morning, when Lewis, who had tried in vain to sleep, crept in upon them in his dressing-

gown, unobserved, and screamed out, just as Tom Sheridan was about to make a stroke, "Shame! shame! a married man;" the consequence of which was, that the player started, missed his stroke, and lost the game. Here, as was the case wherever he went, Lewis was a great favourite and treated accordingly; and to be petted by dukes and lords is very pleasant—at least we should fancy so. The Duchess of Bedford, on leaving the castle, lent him the two first volumes of a novel she was reading, and sent him the third from the end of the first stage by the groom who returned with the Duke of Argyle's horses. This flattering attention he narrated to his mother with the same simplicity as he afterwards did the grandeur of Woburn Abbey, where at breakfast every person had a silver tea-pot appropriated to his own use,—a tea-pot splendour likely to drive common people into violent cynicism. But of all the noble inmates, gentle or noisy, of Inverary Castle, Lady Charlotte Campbell, the lovely and accomplished daughter of the Duke of Argyle, was the one that made the deepest impression on Lewis. He fell in love with her; and when convinced that his passion was hopeless he continued to love her, even to the last. So we will pardon him for being affected, and a little fop, and a toady.

Even at this time, upon first entering brilliant and expensive circles, he did not allow society to occupy all his attention, and from his moderate income of £1000 per annum (dependent on the capricious will of an unamiable father) he reserved a considerable sum for his mother, and for charitable expenditure. Now he gave substantial relief to a young and virtuous actress, now he conveyed help to a widow lady, striving to subsist by her pen; and the little boy of this last-mentioned object of his charity he educated out of his own purse, and eventually gave him a gentlemanly position in life. And these and a thousand other acts of charity, involving no trifling self-denial, were

performed with that utter absence of ostentation which is the best characteristic of a noble benefactor.

In 1812, Mr. Lewis, senior, died, leaving his son, whom he had treated with injustice during the latter years of his life, a rich man. Instantly on acquiring his great wealth, Monk Lewis gave himself up to the pleasure of doing deeds of generosity. A thousand a year he settled on his mother; and all other claimants on his affectionate care met with similar treatment. But his benevolence did not end in the performance of merciful actions to those by whom he was immediately surrounded. Property had responsibilities that he was determined not to neglect; so in due time he started for the West Indies, to visit his estates there, and to see what he could do to ameliorate the condition of his slaves. On the 10th of November, 1816, he sailed from England, and arrived in Jamaica on the New Year's Day following. On November 4, 1815, Lord Byron in his easy chair, in a warm London library, wrote to Tom Moore, "Lewis is going to Jamaica to suck his sugar-canes. He sails in two days; I enclose you his farewell note. I saw him last night at Drury Lane Theatre for the last time previous to his voyage. Poor fellow! he is really a good man—an excellent man—he left me his walking-stick and a pot of preserved ginger. I shall never eat the last without tears in my eyes, it is so *hot*." So much for the friendship of a poet!

What Lewis did and thought in Jamaica may be read in a book that will richly pay the trouble of perusal—"The Journal of a West India Proprietor," which was published after his death. There is doubtless in it much to provoke a reader's smiles; but in every page are touching evidences of the goodness of the writer's heart, which are not diminished by the amusing rhapsodies he indulges in on the beauty of his slaves, who remind him in turns of Grassini in "*La Vergine del Sole*," and Addison's "*Marcia*."

Before he returned to England he drew up a code of laws for the government of the black population of his estates, which were well adapted to defend them from excessive tyranny on the part of their overseers. At first his wish was to abolish flogging altogether, but a very short experience showed him that such a reform must be effected by degrees, so he, in his code, permitted it to be used with moderation. Having made these praiseworthy arrangements, he embarked for England on March the 31st, and reached his own country after a tedious voyage of two months' duration.

Of course on re-appearing in London society, the good little man had to put up with endless bantering about his humanitarian schemes. His code of laws was parodied, and he was represented as having enacted, that any slave who committed murder should have his head shaved, and be confined three days and nights in a dark room. With strange simplicity Lewis said of these parodies to Lady Holland, "Many of them are very fair, but mine is not at all like ; they have made me write burlesque, which I never do."

"Oh," returned the lady, "indeed you don't know your own talent!"

In the August of 1816, he was in Geneva with Byron and Shelley, and while there, he added a codicil to his will, binding the future possessors of his estate in Jamaica to visit it once in three years, and on each visit to abide there three months. If a woman should possess the estate, she might perform the condition by deputing her husband, or one of her sons, or a brother to do it. This codicil was witnessed by Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Polidori.

Willing to perform the same task that he laid on his heirs, Lewis made a second voyage to Jamaica, in the *Sir Godfrey Webster*, which left England in November 1817. One of the passengers in the same ship has borne testimony

to the popularity, the "Monk," obtained on board by the courtesy of his manners, and the delicate acts of kindness he did to all who came in contact with him. On arriving at his estate he found every thing in a most satisfactory state. "The condition," wrote the kind-hearted man, "in which I find my estate, overpays me for all that I have suffered in coming to see it. I have now been here a fortnight, *and have not found one negro with even an imaginary ground of grievance; they were all delighted to see me.*"

On the 4th of May, 1818, Lewis re-embarked in the Sir Godfrey Webster, to return to England. The voyage proved sadly disastrous, for the yellow fever broke out on board, and attacked alike crew and passengers. Lewis was stricken with it, or some similar malady, and soon became alarmingly ill; but instead of heeding the advice of his medical attendant who urged him to keep in bed, he persisted in walking about the deck. Violent sea-sickness added to his agonies, and on or about the 10th of May, at midnight, he demanded from the ship's steward a dose of emetic, thinking it might relieve him of an insupportable load on his stomach. He took the drug, and from that time his retchings were incessant till two hours after the midnight of the 13th, when he fell into a composure from which he never awoke, and at four o'clock in the morning he lay in the sleep of death, with his head thrown a little back on the pillow, and his arms crossed upon his breast.

His illness was an unspeakably painful one, and it appears that in his cruel agonies of mind and body, he uttered heart-rending groans and even frightful imprecations.

For the safety of the crew it was deemed necessary to commit the corpse without delay to the waves; so after it had been placed in a slight deal coffin, to which were attached four eighteen pounders, and which was wrapped in a common white sheet, it was lowered from the ship into the great ocean, the Captain having previously read the

funeral service. "At the first plunge," says an eyewitness, "the coffin disappeared entirely; but rising again, the sheet that had been fastened round it became partially disarranged, and the air introducing itself between the folds, inflated them, and buoyed the coffin up, so that it floated on the surface of the waters, just like a boat with its sails full set. It was observed by a few of the passengers, from a window in the front cabin, where suddenly, to their surprise and terror, they beheld this novel and spectre-like object borne up by the swell of the sea, almost on a level with themselves. . . . Around the vessel that coffin bark danced like a fearful mockery; then heaving heavily over the surf, as if unwilling still to part from the living world, it bent its course towards the shores of the Havanna."

When the news of his death reached England, it caused an abundance of marvellous gossip, the pious people saying that Providence had at length overtaken the impious Mr. Lewis (as if Providence and "the Monk" had for many years been having a neck-and-neck race), and the anti-abolitionists averring that he had died of a subtle poison administered to him by the very slaves he had been so good to. His friend Lord Byron, with grief at his heart, and sarcasm quickening his brain, jotted down in his note book—"Poor fellow! he died a martyr to his new riches—of a second visit to Jamaica.

"I'd give the lands of Deloraine
Dark Musgrave were alive again.

that is—

"I would give many a sugar cane
Monk Lewis were alive again."

So ended the man who enables the lover of paradoxes to say, that the writer of one of the most immoral and obscene books of our literature, was a man of what is ordinarily called a pure life, and who unquestionably was a philanthropist.

CHAPTER VII.

THEODORE HOOK.

It is remarkable, as illustrating how the mind in the consideration of the lives of celebrated men is prone to rest on the sunshine and avoid the gloom, that the career of Theodore Hook should be more frequently mentioned as one of brilliant success, than one of dark misfortune. To the very frivolous of worldly minds, it has certainly more that elicits envy than awakens commiseration, for Hook was by birth a plebeian, and he rose to be the associate and darling of nobles; but by any one endowed with strength of character of any sort, it can only be regarded with pain, or contempt, or a proud pity composed of both scorn and compassion. The prudent man reflects that Hook, with mental powers of a very high order, failed to attain that which he most valued and desired, a dignified social position; the man of honour remembers that the brilliant writer died a bankrupt, with a heavy debt of honour unsettled, which he might have liquidated over and over again and again; the lover of literature must ever warmly condemn the author who by turns neglected his art and used it for the attainment of mean ends; and with the earnest and religious of all classes and denominations, the name of Theodore Hook has been for many a day, and will be as long as it shall occupy any share of human attention, a bye-word for abused talents, and wretched moral degradation.

The father of Theodore Hook was a musician born at Norwich in the year 1746, and was for some time an organist in one of the churches of that city. His musical

talents were great, and ere long, feeling he was capable of obtaining greater than provincial celebrity, he proceeded to London, where he obtained an engagement at the Mary-le-bone Gardens, from which place of entertainment, he moved to the Vauxhall Gardens, where for fifty years he was an especial favorite. His industry in his vocation is attested by 140 complete works and upwards of 2000 songs, of which he was the composer.

Mr. Hook was twice married, his first wife being the beautiful and accomplished authoress of "The Double Disguise," played with success at Drury Lane, in 1784. Her maiden name was Madden, and she gave her husband two sons—James, and, after a lapse of sixteen years, Theodore.

James, the elder, was educated at Westminster and Oxford, took holy orders, wrote two novels—"Pen Owen" and "Percy Mallory," made a reputation, and the friendship of Mr. Pitt, by various political writings, obtained possession of several valuable pieces of church preferment, and finally was made Dean of Worcester by Lord Liverpool in 1825, on the command of His Majesty, George the Fourth.

Theodore Edward Hook was born Sept. 22nd, 1788, in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square—a quarter that he lived to despise with all the energy of a noble nature. After having been dragged through two or three preparatory schools, in which he was regarded as "a dull little boy," he sojourned for a brief period in the great school at Harrow. Byron was there at the same time, and exercised his influence on the new comer. A certain elderly lady was espied by the two lads, engaged at her toilet table before a window. His lordship, who appears to have been unlike the correct and chivalric young gentlemen who people the Eton of Coningsby, as soon as he espied the venerable woman, in a spirit of gentle pleasantry ordered Hook to throw a stone at her. Hook of course complied; and,

though the lady escaped uninjured, the window was smashed.

In 1802, Theodore had the misfortune to lose his mother, upon which event he left Harrow, and child as he was commenced writing—songs for his father, and slight comic pieces for the stage. His first effort as a dramatic author, “The Soldier’s Return; or What can Beauty do,” was performed, with triumphant success, at Drury Lane in 1805, when he was only sixteen years of age.

Here was a dazzling and dangerous commencement of life for the boy whose personal appearance was as elegant, as his address was ingratiating and his wit extraordinary. The green rooms of the theatres were thrown open to him, the most lively humourists of the day were anxious to make his acquaintance, and young actresses were not slow to show how they were enamoured of the handsome ‘boy author.’ His pockets also were well filled with money; for he was paid £50 for “The Soldier’s Return,” and for his songs, which were published in rapid succession, and which no one could sing so charmingly as their author himself, he obtained sums that were really great, and appeared to him rivers of wealth.

Of the numerous anecdotes that are told of his merriment and practical joking, on this early introduction ‘behind the scenes,’ the best perhaps is that of his startling ‘the house’ of the Haymarket, during the excitement of a Westminster Election, by an earnest cry, supposed to proceed from the ‘Wood Demon’ of “Sheridan for ever.” In 1806, appeared at the Haymarket, his farce of “Catch Him who Can.” In the same year was produced at Drury Lane from his pen “The Invisible Girl,” taken from the “Babillard” of M. Charles Maurice, and familiar to the present generation under the name of “Patter *versus* Clatter,” Mr. Charles Matthews having recast it. In the following year (1807) young Hook supplied the Haymarket with, “The Fortress.” a drama in three acts, taken from the French, and in the course of the same season appeared his “Tekeli, or the

Siege of Mongratz," which was a very popular melo-drama, and procured its author the honour of being mentioned by an old school-fellow in "The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

"Gods ! o'er these boards shall folly rear her head,
Where Garrick trod, and Kemble lives to tread ?
On those shall Farce display buffoonery's mask,
And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask ?"

"The Siege of St. Quentin," and "Killing no Murder," followed "Tekeli," and kept the name of the young author before the world, and, though they may now have passed from the memory and regard of man, prove the industry with which Hook kept at work.

Just before Theodore burst into this life of the theatres, his elder brother, who saw from the success of the first songs what would follow, made a laudable attempt to induce him to prosecute a systematic course of education. The consequence of the future dean's entreaties was, that Theodore became a member of the University of Oxford, in 1804, but with no good result. "You seem very young, Sir," said the Vice-Chancellor to him, when he entered, "are you prepared to sign the thirty-nine articles?" "Oh yes, Sir," was the answer, "quite ready—forty, if you please." This untimely jocularly well nigh cut short his University career *before it had begun*. It ought here to be remarked that the joke was not original, but was taken out of one of Foote's farces. It is also related that on the very evening after he had been admitted a member of the University he contrived to slip away from his brother, and join a noisy party of old schoolfellows at a tavern. The entertainment, as it proceeded, became so uproarious that one of the proctors found it necessary to break into the apartment and see what was going on. "Pray, sir, are you a member of this University?" asked the academical magistrate, going up to Hook, who was acting as host,

"No, Sir," was the cool answer—"are you?"

"Sir," retorted the irate proctor, holding up his velvet sleeves of office to observation, "you see this?"

For a few seconds Hook earnestly gazed at the texture of the fabric, and then remarked with business-like gravity, "Exactly—Manchester velvet—and may I take the liberty of enquiring how much you might have paid per yard for the article?"

Of course there was no standing this. The proctor was utterly defeated, and amidst a deafening tumult of laughter was carried off at full gallop by his own bull dogs.

The slight restrictions of University discipline were, as those who knew him best predicted they would be, too much for Theodore to bear; and after a short residence at St. Mary's Hall, he quitted Alma Mater, with none of the learning, and with some of the worst and narrowest prejudices, of the thorough-bred Oxford man.

It was subsequent to this brief sojourn on classic ground, that Hook in his twentieth year came before the world in the character of a novelist. The fiction was called "Alfred Allendale, Esq.," and was published in three volumes 8vo. In every respect it was as weak as the most wretched of all the wretched Minerva Press romances, and it abounded in classical quotations. It deservedly met the fate of silent condemnation at the time of its appearance; but many years afterwards, when Hook's fame was made, upon his recasting the silly story and re-issuing it in his "Sayings and Doings," the world discovered that it was a remarkably brilliant work of art.

After this failure as a writer of fiction, Hook wisely confined his literary industry to the fabrication of such wares as the theatres and his father's music business offered him a market for. That his perseverance was great and well rewarded has already been shown.

It was not long ere Hook's reputation for wit spread from

green-room circles, and obtained for him admittance to society that he was especially desirous to enter. In real truth Hook's art—that in which he burned to excel, and which he systematically studied and pursued, even in his time of greatest difficulty—was the art of *shining in society*. Spurred on, as brilliant women are, by what is generally called vanity, but oftentimes deserves the more dignified name of artistic enthusiasm, he worked hard to fit himself to act the part of “a star.” His taste for music was carefully cultivated; and he exercised more prudence in *making time* to practise the piano and singing in, than many a leaden-eyed student does in confining himself to worm-eaten books. He discovered in himself the power of an improvisatore, and forthwith zealously cultivated such an attractive faculty; by day as he walked the streets, and at all spare moments, he constructed rhymes to the most out-of-the-way words, and to the names of celebrated people; and amongst his materials for impromptu facetiæ lay the whispered scandals of the “great,” fashioned into lyric verse. Morbidly anxious for applause, he naturally feared ridicule with the craven fear of a vain young man; and so completely did this dread of failure overpower the impudence of his nature, that on the first occasion of his taking part in some private theatricals, his frame trembled as a young lady's ought to do, when receiving her *first* offer, and his voice was inaudible to “the house.”

From what has just been stated, it must not be supposed that we under-rate Hook's power as an improvisatore, or wish to suggest that his wit was not so ready or on the spur of the moment as in the case of others of his art. All we would imply is that doubtless Hook, like Sheridan, was prudent enough to make the most of his resources. But whatever may have been the means by which he educated his powers, and husbanded the jokes that glittered in every stanza of his extempore songs, there can be no doubt as to

the effect produced by them on his audiences. Sometimes he failed, perhaps often during the last years of his declining health, but generally all who heard were struck with astonishment and pleasure. Such verses as those well known ones commencing

“The charming extempore verses of Twiss’s”

could not have been otherwise than the children of the occasion and the active brain that seized upon it; and the cleverness with which the name of Mr. Rosenagen was brought out in an improvisation is almost as wonderful.

“Yet more of my Muse is required

Alas ! I fear she is done ;

But no ! like a fiddler that’s tired

I’ll *Rosen-agen* and go on.”

Campbell, the poet, spoke of Hook as “a wonderful creature,” who sang extempore songs “not to my admiration, but to my astonishment.” Coleridge, more enthusiastic than the Scotchman, declared the improvisatore to be as true a genius as Dante. But this high praise was consequent on a revel of so thorough-paced a description as to deserve mention here. At the villa of a gay young bachelor, Frederick Mansell Reynolds, near Highgate, was assembled a party of which Hook and Coleridge were the *lions*. The concluding scene has been described by an eye-witness in the following racy style. “Much claret had been shed before the *ancient mariner* proclaimed that he could swallow no more of anything, unless it were punch. The materials were forthwith produced, the bowl was planted before the poet, and as he proceeded in his concoction, Hook, unbidden, took his place at the piano. He burst into a bacchanal of egregious luxury, every line of which had reference to the author of the *Lay Sermons* and the *Aids to Reflection*. The room was becoming excessively hot ; the first specimen of the new compound was handed to Hook, who paused to quaff it, and then exclaiming that he was stifled, flung his

glass through the window. Coleridge rose with the aspect of a benignant patriarch and smashed another pane; the example was followed generally; the window was a sieve in an instant; the kind host was the farthest from the mark, and his goblet made havoc of the chandelier. The roar of laughter was drowned in Theodore's resumption of the song, and window and chandelier and the peculiar shot of each individual destroyer had apt, in many cases exquisitely witty, commemoration. In walking home with Mr. Coleridge, he entertained —— and me with a most excellent lecture on the distinction between talent and genius, and declared that Hook was as true a genius as Dante." That Coleridge should *talk*, under any circumstances, would surprise no one; but that he was able to *walk* home after such a revel, is interesting.

One of the first public displays made by Hook of his extraordinary gift was at a dinner given by the actors of the Drury Lane Theatre to Sheridan (their manager), to celebrate his success at the Westminster Election. Sheridan was delighted with the young man, cordially gave him the hand of good-fellowship, and introduced him to those "highest" circles of the *beau monde*, of which the greatest gentleman in Europe was the *dulce decus*.

It was when he had achieved for himself a position as a dramatic writer of amusing, if not unusual powers, and as a wit whose presence was held to adorn the most exclusive saloons of the aristocracy, that Hook's fierce animal spirits and wild humour burst out into the first of those practical jokes which made his name known as an author of "hoaxes" in remote provinces, to which the reputation of his plays had not wandered. With the best of these noisy out-pourings of humour, the readers of "Gilbert Gurney" (and who has not read "Gurney?") are familiar. Hook's boisterous mirth proved, what stupid men are bold enough sometimes to deny, that a joke may be what is censoriously

termed "practical," and yet be the expression of subtle humour. In the same manner his puns (we allude to the best of them,) prove that the most exquisite wit may shine forth in a play upon words.

Perhaps the two best puns to be found in Hook's writings are two French ones, which he *introduced* into one of his novels in the following manner. "For instance," said his lordship, "I remember a French loyalist showing me the statue of Bonaparte resting on a triumphal car in the Place du Carousel; but hating the man, he pointed to the figure, and said with incomparable archness, "Voilà, Bonaparte, le Char-l'-attend!" The same man, on my remarking the letter N used as a decoration for the public buildings in Paris, said, "Oui, Monsieur; nous avons à présent les N mis partout!" That Hook (like every good punster) made a distressing number of *bad* puns there can be no doubt, when his own pen has stated a glazier to be a pains-taking man, a bailiff to be one who has a very taking manner, Sir James McAdam to be a highwayman, and a gentleman, pouring tea from a pot into cups, to be like a milliner—because he is "a man-tea-maker."

On one occasion a most superb old gentleman, the incarnation of pompous self-complacency, happened to be stalking sedately along the Strand, when he was accosted by a youthful and stylish man, who inquired with a courteous bow—"I beg your pardon, sir, but pray may I ask, are you anybody in particular?" Before the venerable man could recover from the first shock of surprise, and begin to collect his fury, the interrogator, who was Theodore Hook, had passed on.

In the year 1809, he perpetrated the famous Berners Street hoax, causing No. 54 of that street to be besieged from early morning till the close of the day by an army of unexpected visitors. Sweeps in crowds from every quarter of chimney-dom, waggons laden with coal from all the coal

wharves along the Thames, gangs of confectioners (each bearing a wedding cake), drays laden with beer-barrels, bootmakers, tailors, undertakers summoned to pack up and remove, *secundum artem*, "the slough of some poor human soul," chariots and four to bear away a couple of "undone fools" to the questionable bliss of the honeymoon, surgeons from every hospital between Mile End and Hyde Park prepared for slaughter, clergymen invited to administer comfort to a dying sinner, lawyers summoned on dainty "business," forty fishmongers with forty "cod and lobsters," forty butchers with forty legs of mutton, the Lord Mayor in his state carriage, the Governor of the Bank of England hastening to hear the particulars of a giant fraud meditated upon the Bank, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the chairman of the East India Company, the Lord Chief Justice, representatives of every profession, trade, and vocation in the great Babel of London, amongst whom his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief may not be forgotten, fought, or tried to fight their way to that doomed No. 54, through such a tumultuous sea of swearing dupes and angry faces as no contested election ever produced. The house belonged to a widow lady, and sorely troubled the poor creature must have been by the mischief of Hook who, with his accomplices, sat, blessed with success, at a window in the street, and witnessed the storm he had raised. The chief merit due to Hook for this scandalous hoax was for the magnificence of its dimensions. The idea of the joke was borrowed from France, where it had been performed on a small scale, albeit Hook to the last stoutly maintained that it originated in his fertile humour.

On one occasion Hook was in a hackney-coach without any money to pay the fare. Not, however, at a loss how to free himself from so disagreeable a position, he ordered the driver to take him to the house of a celebrated surgeon in the West end of the town.

"Mr. ——— is at home?" Hook exclaimed hurriedly to the servant who opened the surgeon's door. "I must see him immediately. For God's sake, don't lose an instant."

In a twinkling the excited man was ushered into the surgeon's consulting-room, when he cried out incoherently, "Thank Heaven!—pardon my incoherence, Sir—make allowance for the feelings of a husband—*perhaps a father*—your attendance, Sir, is instantly required—*instantly*—by Mrs. ———, No. ———, for mercy's sake, Sir, be off."

"I'll be on my way immediately," returned the surgeon, with the prompt benevolence of his profession. "I have only to run up stairs, get my apparatus, and step into my carriage."

"Good ———, Sir, don't wait for your carriage, get into my coach, and make all speed."

The good man obeyed, and was conveyed to the residence of a tart old spinster, who heard him explain the object of his visit with mingled horror and fury. When he retired from the house, and proceeded to dismiss the hackney-coachman, that locomotive person preferred a claim for the settlement of a certain little account, which opened the eyes of the surgeon to the nature of his position.

Hook and a chosen companion, whom history dimly designates "a gentleman in the Treasury," made a trip of rustication into Wales, travelling in a gig drawn by a showy white horse, provided by the "gentleman in the Treasury!" At first fishing the clear streams, admiring magnificent scenery, and exploring picturesque ruins, pleased Theodore well enough, but ere long he distasted such placid amusements, and for the sake of "getting up an excitement," dotted the white horse all over with black wafers. The sight of such an extraordinary beast of course supplied them with a crowd of starers wherever they went.

These practical jokes, familiar as they are to every one,

have been briefly mentioned here, as they are a fair specimen of the numerous "hoaxes" Hook perpetrated, of which every good fellow who enjoys laughter has a favourite. Mirth, and music, and mad laughter had as yet, however, done little for Theodore, in the way of worldly provision; the exchequer derived from his theatrical writings was out-run by his expenses, and friends were beginning to whisper that Hook must pull up, or get hold of "something or other," or make the acquaintance of a debtor's prison. In such a critical condition were his affairs, when the "something or other" came to his hands. Hook had been introduced to the Marchioness of Hertford, "the gentle Marchesa," who dwelt in Manchester Square, and had in that lady's mansion, at a supper, charmed the Regent with his musical and metrical powers. "Mr. Hook, I must see and hear you again," said the Regent, *almost* grateful for a new sensation of pleasure. And on a subsequent occasion the royal voluptuary said, with an intonation of meaning, that "something *must be done for Hook.*" There were just then a good many things which the nation wanted done by the Regent, but that splendid functionary was not equally alive to the duty of doing them. The result of this recognition by the royal conscience of the necessity of achieving something for Hook was, that that lucky fellow was appointed Accountant-General and Treasurer to the Colony of the Mauritius, the emoluments of which office were £2000 per annum. It was rumoured that the Regent's benevolent intentions were stimulated to action by the entreaties of a distinguished lady, who had as much influence on the Prince's affections as Theodore had on hers. The propriety of appointing a young spendthrift, some twenty-five years of age, and totally unacquainted and unfitted for business, to keep the purse of a colony, cannot be questioned. The government had, at that time, numerous servants of tried honour and ability starving on clerkships of £250 per

annum, but they were not gifted with the power to amuse the patriotic circle who surrounded the Marchioness of Hertford.

Hook arrived at Mauritius in the October of 1813, and found that delightful island "a paradise and not without angels." There was an abundance of handsome and accomplished women who gave life and brilliance to an endless succession of balls, and to the one unceasing run of dissipation in which the upper classes of the colony consumed their health and days. Operas, races, the dinners of the Mauritius 'Beaf Steak' club, Government-House balls at which were present more than seven hundred and fifty ladies, and orgies at the Freemason's lodge, occupied the attention of the Accountant General. It was soon clear to Hook that he was not destined to grow rich out of his savings from his salary. "I dare say," he observed, writing to Matthews, "some of my fat-headed friends in that little island where the beef grows, fancy that I am making a fortune, considering that I am Treasurer and Accountant General. Fresh butter, my dear fellow, is ten shillings per pound, a coat costs thirty pounds English, a pair of gloves fifteen shillings; a bottle of claret, the best, ten-pence; and pine-apples a penny a piece. Thus, you see, while the articles necessary to existence are exorbitant, luxuries are dirt cheap—and a pretty life we do lead. Breakfast at eight, always up by gun-fire, five o'clock; bathe and ride before breakfast—after breakfast lounge about, at one have a regular meal, yclepd a tiffen—hot meats, vegetables &c.—and at this we sit generally through the heat of the day, drinking our wine and munching our fruit; at five, or half-past, the carriages come to the door, and we go either in them or palanquins to dress, which operation performed we drive out to the race-ground, and through the Champ de Mars, the Hyde Park here, till half-past six; come into town, and at seven dine, where we remain till ten or eleven,

and then join the French parties, as there is regularly a ball somewhere or other every night: these things, *blended with business* (!), make out the day and evening."

The amount of business with which these things were blended was very slight, the duties of his department were altogether neglected, or else attended to with a hurried pretence of official care that is worse even than total neglect. His accounts as treasurer when they came to be examined were found to be in such inexplicable confusion, that it was impossible for the most practised actuaries to decide on the exact limits of their errors.

His stay on the island was of about five years' duration, and it terminated in indelible disgrace to him. At the close of 1817, General Sir R. Farquhar found it necessary to quit the island for England, and during his absence Major-General Gage John Hall was Deputy-Governor. Before Sir R. Farquhar sailed, a commission of five gentlemen appointed by him audited the accounts of the treasury, and they certified in a report, dated Nov. 19, 1817, that the chest and accounts were all in a proper state. In the January of 1818, Allan, a clerk in the Mauritius Treasury Office, wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Hall, stating that the Treasurer's accounts were false, and that no credit had been given for 37,150 dollars which Allan knew had been paid in fifteen months before. On the reception of this intelligence another commission was immediately appointed, and a re-examination of the accounts was commenced. The result of the second scrutiny was the discovery of gross defalcations in the treasury books. The accusation preferred by Allan was in substance proved true; but strange to say, the man, on the 27th of February, before the labours of the second commission had been brought to a close, shot himself when in a state of nervous excitement, bordering on madness. In his last letter before the act of suicide he stated that Hook had tampered with him, and offered to

pay him twenty-five dollars per month, if he would instantly depart from the island. This statement was, however, flatly contradicted by the person whom he affirmed Hook had used as the bearer of his offer. The tragical death of Allan and the denial given to his last important assertion, suggested to those who knew and loved the Treasurer's better qualities, that it was possible, indeed highly probable, that the peculation of the public money was in truth committed by the inferior clerk who, despairing of throwing all the blame upon the shoulders of his superior and saving himself from suspicion, blew out his brains.

That a great fraud had been perpetrated no one could question ; and for that fraud the Treasurer, whose habits of life, in which gambling and horse-racing figured, were notoriously extravagant, was responsible. On the 9th of March Hook, while at supper at a friend's house, was arrested and carried off to prison. After a few days he was shipped off to England, "to be tried for *crimes*." During his long and wretched voyage of nine months, he underwent in common with all on board much hardship. For six weeks he was reduced to an allowance of half-a-pound of mouldy biscuit, and half-a-pint of water per diem. While the vessel was refitting at the Cape, he was permitted to go on shore, on *parole* ; and when she stopped at St. Helena, he was taken by the officers who had charge of him to Longwood on the occasion of their being presented to "Fatty, late Boney." It was at St. Helena that he met with Lord Charles Somerset, on his way to govern the Cape. "I hope you are not going home for your health, Mr. Hook," said his lordship, who was altogether ignorant of the unfortunate and degraded position of the man whom he addressed. "Why," replied Hook, flippant and unabashed when any man of delicacy would have blushed with shame, "I am sorry to say, they think there's something wrong in the chest." This unpleasant story has been often repeated as a good instance of

Hook's wit. The joke was not his own, plays without number had borrowed it from jest-books older than Joe Miller, and it was everlastingly on the lips of every would-be-wag of that day; but the application was his—and sadly characteristic of him.

In the January of 1819 the vessel arrived at Portsmouth, and the crown lawyers were applied to in London to say what was to be done with Hook. The Attorney General replied, that however faulty the Treasurer's conduct might have been, there was nothing on which to ground a criminal prosecution. Hook was immediately summoned to appear before the Board of Colonial Audit in London, and for a period of three years, he was continually being subjected to examination by that board. In such inexplicable confusion were his accounts, that it was difficult to arrive at even a general statement of his debt to the crown. At first his defalcations appeared to amount to about £15,000; eventually, in the autumn of 1823, they were pronounced to be £12,000. Hook, in everything that related to this matter, behaved with contemptible meanness. He haggled and argued to prove that his defalcations were £1,000 or so less than they were in the opinion of the Board of Audit, as if shaving off a few items from the bill of charges would affect the dimensions, or the colour of the blot that rested on his reputation. After the termination of the tedious examination, he allowed himself to be responsible for £9,000, although he contended that justice would strike off £3,000 from that amount. It is needless to say that he never exerted himself to pay a penny either of the £10,000, or £9,000, or £6,000.

In consequence of the report of the Colonial Audit Board Hook was arrested under an Exchequer writ in the August of 1823, and was taken to a filthy sponging house kept by a man named Hemp in Shire Lane. From this squalid den he moved in the April of 1824, when after nine months of

painful and degrading incarceration he emigrated to the King's Bench. Even in such a noxious dungeon as Hemp's sponging house he kept up his flow of animal spirits, exerted himself to amuse his fellow prisoners, fascinated his jailer's family by his hilarity, and gathered round him a few of his old and especial intimates from theatrical and literary circles. The last night of his residence in Shire Lane, was celebrated by about as delightful and blackguard an orgy as any set of merry rogues ever participated in. When the mirth and revel were at their acmé, Hook rose and sang with amazing spirit an extempore ballad, in which he made a jest of his own misfortunes and disgrace, and ridiculed the absurd versions of his misdemeanours, that had obtained popular credence. The chorus, shouted out by his pot-valiant comrades, was

Let him hang with a curse, this atrocious, pernicious
Scoundrel that emptied the till at Mauritius.

The following verses may be taken as a fair sample of the whole :—

Then Hook says to Allan " We're blown, my poor nigger,
We at last are found out to be loose in the figure ;
We've sacked it, and spent it, and cannot repay,
So let's e'en hop the twig in the old Roman way !"

" O massa !" says Allan, " whatever you do,
It will comfort my heart to accompany you.
That there grog at the governor's ! O what a goose !
Which is best, steel or lead, or a drop of the juice ?"

" First a drop of the juice this here bottle contains—
And then barkers, like gemmen, to blow out our brains !
Here they are, fill your glass, to that bedroom retire,
Make ready, present, and when mine goes off—fire !"

Humble Allan then manfully emptied his glass,
And with pistol on cock to the bedroom did pass ;
In a moment he heard massa's *bang*, and the nigger
In his mouth clapp'd the muzzle and drew back the trigger.

Then the beaks tumbled in, in black, bistre and yellow,
And found Hook in great horror beside the poor fellow.
His own bullet of course perforated the floor—
And the peacher could now be cross-questioned no more.

The close confinement Hook underwent in Shire Lane was cruel to him in more than one respect; the deprivation of his customary active bodily exercise had so serious an effect on his health, that when he moved to the King's Bench, though his intellects were not in the slightest degree impaired, his figure, once so graceful, had become misshapen by corpulence, and his face was disguised by a flabbiness and pallor which it was never to lose. Hook to the last was almost as great a dandy as Brummel; and this loss of personal appearance must have been a most unkind blow to him.

In the March of 1825, the Lords of the Treasury received the final report of the Audit Board; and soon after, Hook was set at liberty, but he was given to understand that he was "in no degree exonerated from his liability to the debt, if he should hereafter have the means of discharging it." Immediately he was liberated, the late Mr. Nash offered to lend him £2000, clearly with a view to enable him immediately on obtaining his freedom, to commence handsomely the work of paying that debt which ought to have weighed so heavily on his honour. The liberal offer was declined.

As it is our purpose to enumerate the principal occurrences of Hook's life, we must now go a few paces backwards. It may not be supposed that during the harassing enquiry of the Audit Board the brilliant man was idle. The exertions he made at this crisis to *right* himself, and recover his lost position in society, are the best evidences of his energy of character. In 1819 he inhabited a cottage in Somers Town, and began to write in the Tory newspapers and magazines. At this gloomy period too he formed a connection with a young and (till she knew him) virtuous woman, who

became the mother of his children, and from whom he lacked to the end of his days either sufficient courage or sufficient villany to free himself. In 1820 he started a magazine called "The Arcadian," and found, as many better writers before and after him have done, that starting and keeping up a serial are two very different things. Only two numbers appeared. At this time also he furnished the stage with the well known "Exchange no Robbery," for the copyright of which he received £60. At the close of 1820 occurred the great literary achievement of Hook's life; he started the "John Bull" newspaper.

Those who are acquainted only with the grave and respectable "John Bull," which instructs and amuses a large portion of the *Conservative* houses in the country, can form but a poor conception of the personality and acrimony and black-guardism which marked the commencement of its career. Its policy was Tory; its especial object, at its beginning, was to aid George the Fourth, who was then in the full heat of his battle with his wife, and to frighten the ladies of the Whig aristocracy from Brandenburgh House by surrounding the unfortunate Queen with ridiculous and contemptible associations. Hook's plan of procedure was to find out the sore point in the family history of his political adversary, and to publish it to the world in its most disagreeable aspect. If his foe were a lady, so much the better. Hook took pleasure in thrusting the steel of his sarcasm into anyone, but he preferred operating on the gentle and sensitive—for they *felt* it! The *Quarterly Review* in the stanzas which they published from "Hunting the Hare"—one of the first songs published in the "Bull"—did not from motives politicians can appreciate publish the following one:—

"Bold, yet half-blushing, the gay Lady Jersey
Drove up to the entrance, but halted outside,
While Sefton's fair tribe, from the banks of the Mersey,
Who promised to keep her in countenance shyed.

But this never hinders
 The sham Lady L——,
 Who stoutly goes in-doors—
 Old Rush does the same;
 Great scorn of all such is;
 But Bedford's great Duchess,
 To get in her clutches,
 Delighted the dame."

Again, as a specimen of the tone adopted by the "Bull," and its editor in this contest, take four from the thirty-two stanzas of the very witty and very scurrilous "Visit to Mrs. Muggins."

Have you been to Brandenburgh, heigh, ma'am, ho, ma'am?
 Have you been to Brandenburgh, ho?
 Oh yes, I have been, ma'am, to visit the Queen, ma'am,
 With the rest of the gallantee show, show—
 With the rest of the gallantee show.

And who were the company, heigh, ma'am, ho, ma'am?
 Who were the company, ho?
 We happened to drop in with gemmen from Wapping
 And ladies from Blowbladder row, row—
 Ladies from Blowbladder row.

What saw you at Brandenburgh, heigh, ma'am, ho, ma'am?
 What saw you at Brandenburgh, ho?
 We saw a great dame, with a face red as flame,
 And a character spotless as snow, snow—
 A character spotless as snow.

And who were attending her, heigh, ma'am, ho, ma'am?
 Who were attending her, ho?
 Lord Hood for a man—for a maid Lady Anne—
 And Alderman Wood for a beau, beau—
 Alderman Wood for a beau.

Such lampoons were published in the days of duelling, and read with admiration in the best society. If the like were to appear now in these peaceful days of liberty of the press, the writer would be horsewhipped for every calumny. In justification, however, of Hook, it must be admitted that

in this respect, the Whig journalists were by no means in a position to cast a stone at their opponents.

The first number of the "John Bull" was struck off on the evening (Saturday) of December the 16th, 1820, in that classic spot near Fleet Street, Gough Square. The editor and the proprietor had bounded their hopes with a sale of seven hundred and fifty impressions, and had provided themselves with only that number of stamps; but such, and so sudden was the demand for the new paper, which set all London astir, that the workmen had to strike off hundreds of copies on Sunday, upon unstamped paper, the publisher paying the extra duty on the Monday morning.

While in prison Hook was as much the life and sole support of "The Bull" as he was when at liberty; and it was in 1824 (during his confinement), that he made his second appearance as a novelist. His youthful and futile effort in that character is, of course, not forgotten by the reader.

The first series (3 vols.) of "Sayings and Doings," published 1824, was so successful that it gave the author £2,000.

In 1825, appeared the second series of "Sayings and Doings," also in 3 vols.

In 1828, came the third series of "Sayings and Doings," 3 vols.

In 1830, was published "Maxwell," a novel, 3 vols.

In 1832, appeared "The Life of Sir David Baird," 2 vols.

In 1833, were issued to the public "The Parson's Daughter," and "Love and Pride," each in 3 vols.

In 1836, Hook became editor of "The New Monthly Magazine," and contributed to it "Gilbert Gurney," and "Gurney Married," each subsequently published in 3 vols.

In 1837, appeared "Jack Brag," in 3 vols.

In 1839 "Births Deaths and Marriages" was published in 3 vols.

Next came "Precepts and Practice," and "Fathers and

Sons" published in the New Monthly of 1840, and afterwards issued each in 3 vols.

"Peregrine Bunce" appeared some months after Hook's death.

Thus in something over sixteen years, he produced thirty-eight volumes, was at the same time editor of and almost sole writer on a weekly paper, and during a portion of the said time was an able conductor of a monthly magazine. Throughout almost all this period he was moreover immersed in society, and systematically indulged in sensual excesses which invariably debilitate the nervous power of those who commit them, and which eventually reduced him to a painful death.

When we consider the success that attended all, even the worst of the above-mentioned works, the fact that Hook in the most prosperous days of the "John Bull" received from that journal, for his editorial services, a clear £2,000 per annum, and the facility his position and reputation gave him for obtaining much lucrative work in literature, that would naturally be performed without the knowledge of the world, we shall in all probability not be overstating the average amount of his annual income, between his liberation from prison and his death, if we calculate it at close on £4,000. What portion of this noble revenue did he set aside for the payment of "his great debt of honour?" 2,000 a year? 3,000 a year?—Not one penny.

He hired a good house at Putney, which was soon filled with much of the most distinguished society of London. The Tory nobility were only too ready to repay his political services, (and great indeed they were!) by treating him as their favoured intimate; for whatever class prejudices might have restrained them from justice, and gratitude to a scribbler, were removed by the consideration that Hook was in style and bearing "a gentleman," and that his brilliant genius made him the most fascinating companion in London.

Forthwith he joined some of the best clubs in the metropolis—the “Athenæum,” “Crockford’s,” and the “Carlton,” and he was one of the original members of that most agreeable of all London clubs, the “Garrick.” Especial notice was taken of him by the Duke of Cumberland—afterwards King of Hanover—and at the small and riotous Sunday dinners given by his royal highness at Kew, Hook was a constant guest for many years. The proudest and wealthiest members of the peerage contested with each other who was to have the honour of bearing him away into the country, for “the first of the pheasants,” or the Christmas revels.

In 1827, he gave up his establishment at Putney, and started a more extravagant one in Cleveland Row. He laid out between two and three thousand pounds in furnishing and decorating the new house, accepting bills to the amount, in the hope his pen would enable him to meet them. The residence was handsome, and, as the *Quarterly Review* said, “appeared extravagantly large for his purpose,”—but it was intended by Hook to be constantly full of visitors, and a portion of it was given up to a poor girl, who lived with him, and to her young family.

No mortal powers could long endure the wear of such a life as he persevered in. Perhaps he felt it necessary to his success, as well as gratifying to his vanity, to be the ‘active’ man in whatever society he entered. It would be easy to point to men who have consumed their days in the unceasing whirl of London gaiety, but it would be difficult to point to any individual whose dissipations have been marked by such reckless imprudence and indifference to health, as were the characteristics of Hook’s laborious life of pleasure. Rising late he pushed aside untasted the breakfast his aching head and fevered pulses rendered him unable to enjoy; and with a strong effort of will he applied himself to work for two or three hours, scribbling the appointed number of pages of the novel

on hand—careless whether it was good or bad, so long as it sold—and dashing off ‘slips’ for the “Bull.” The afternoon was spent in a succession of calls at clubs and private houses, or thrown away in attendances on noisy committee meetings, or in hastening about from money-lender to money-lender to raise a few £10 notes, at enormous interest, for present emergencies. Then came dinner at some patrician table, then a round of visits and improvisations in May-fair. Midnight—not for home, but for the clubs; later still—Crockford’s, from which heaven of folly, the grey dawn would see him reel away, cursing his ill-luck, and already wincing under the approaches of head-ache.

Between four and five o’clock one brilliant morning he on one occasion drove a friend home from a party in his cab. “Ah,” said he, as the cool air blew freshly against his hot cheeks, “you may depend on it, my dear fellow, that there is nothing more injurious to health than *the night air*. I was very ill some months ago, and my doctor gave me particular orders not to expose myself to it.” “I hope,” observed the friend, “you attended to them.” “Oh yes,” was the reply, “strictly; I came up every day to Crockford’s or some other place to dinner, and I made it a rule on no account to go home again till about this hour in the morning.”

To enable him to endure this life of exhaustion, the copious use of stimulating drinks was called in. In the last generation deep drinking was still the order of the day; but Hook’s potations were enormous, even when measured by the achievements of the most renowned toppers of the age. He went to his cups early in the day, and generous glasses of cold punch at luncheon were too often the cause of those brilliant sallies of wit, and absurd extravagances of conduct which made his morning visits so prized by his innumerable acquaintance. Frequently, however, as he raised his hand to his lips (as they say in the North country) he was not often convicted of that form of sobriety which Sheridan said con-

sisted in a man's power to lie flat on his back without holding ; but this arose from the fact, that his nerves could bear such immense quantities of wine, that in a fair glass to glass contest he could see almost any man under the table. But on more than one occasion he was so affected by drink that he exhibited himself under a far more ludicrous aspect, than he would have done had he simply lost the power of standing on his legs. At a public dinner, on his health being proposed in the most complimentary terms, he rose with a countenance of fiery indignation, and demanded why such a liberty had been taken with his name. His audience, naturally thinking that he was assuming the part of an offended man, cheered him with deafening applause. Determined to make himself understood, the orator, in spite of the interruptions of laughter and clapping, poured out such a stream of furious language as left no doubt that he meant what his tongue, and his face, livid with rage, most forcibly expressed.

His favourite club for dining was the Athenæum, and during the season he was sure to be there once or twice a week. The consequence was, that the club was crowded by members, who preferred dining there to anywhere else, for the chance of hearing sentences of the wild merriment that was sure to pour from his lips. He always sat in the same corner—named in honour of him *Temperance Corner*, in consequence of the abundance and potency of the liquors he patronized. In his later days his stomach would not bear wine so well as spirits, and his nerves demanded a stronger stimulus than Champagne or Burgundy. Strong brandy and water and whiskey punch (some said, brandy and whiskey, neat) were his customary beverages at the principal meal of the day. To ask for such refreshment, however, in a club at such a time might have caused scandal amongst graver or weaker brethren, so the waiters (wide-awake) were invariably requested by the occupant of *Temperance Corner*

to bring "another glass of toast-and-water," or "a glass of lemonade." The year after Hook's death "the dinners fell off by upwards of three hundred per annum."

Worldly success and aristocratic petting, we are sorry to say, had even a worse result on Hook than on Sterne. Not only did he become careless of his honour, but he grew to be dead to the promptings of affection. Though he knew his health was failing, and that Death was not to be driven away by a cannonade of Champagne corks, he made no provision for the poor girl whose virtue he had ruined, and of whose babes he was the father. The influences of the splendid and vicious society, of which he was an admired ornament, caused development of all the most contemptible qualities of his nature which, gifted man though he was, was essentially vulgar. He adopted all the prejudices and all the egregious follies of the flutterers of the *beau monde*. The middle classes he held in the most sublime contempt; men who lived the wrong side of Oxford Street he cut; 'not in the world' meant 'not in that small part of London round St. James's;' to be born the son of a respectable solicitor was infamous. The theatrical profession he invariably mentioned with disdain, and he was constantly on the lookout for opportunities to vilify the members of it. A literary man himself, deriving every guinea he squandered from literature, and scarcely to be ranked so high as amongst the second-rate writers of his time, he spoke with horror of "the gentlemen of the press," and could scarcely restrain himself from personal impertinences to authors by profession. Sprung himself from quite the humbler grades of the middle rank of English society, and with a blemished character, debauched morals, and at the bottom of his heart a painful consciousness of his own degraded position, he could not write a book or talk for a couple of hours without turning to ridicule the simple manners and the honest intentions of people who never professed to be anything but simple and

honest. The man doubtless at times persuaded himself that he was descended from a long line of ancestors, and was the owner of vast wealth and an untarnished reputation. Without some such self-delusions he could never have acted as he did. He was a magnificent specimen of the being which in these later times is known as 'a snob.' He scorned the wealth of wealthy shopkeepers, but he was yet more bitter in his contempt for the poverty of poor ones. The inhabitants of Brunswick and Bloomsbury Squares were ridiculed by him, not for living beyond their means, not for being discontented with their comparative obscurity, but because when they gave dinner parties to their friends, they could not afford turbot, and turtle, and venison, but positively placed on their tables the cod's head and shoulders, the gravy soups, and the mutton their purses enabled them to furnish. It was fit matter for a gentleman to gloat over and be satirical about, that people with £300 or £400 per annum were waited on by one maid-servant, instead of a retinue of menials.

One best learns what an insufferable flunkey Hook was, by looking at *his* pictures of the aristocracy he so adored. What vulgar upstarts are the lords and ladies that people his books! what petty aspirations, what selfishness, and what stupidity are their principal characteristics! Veneration of rank is, we are afraid, one of our *national* failings, by which we mean a fault more common and tolerated in our own than in any other country; but Hook added to his worship of the aristocracy, an active and immeasurable loathing for every one beneath the rank of nobility. One of his characters, Mr. Burton Danvers, who "in his day literally swept Oxford of prizes, and took a first-class degree with the most unqualified *éclat*;" who when called to the bar at twenty-six years of age was "full of anecdote, with an elegant mind, good taste, and great quickness, was sought, courted, and admired;" who in addition to an estate of £2,000 per annum

which he gets with his wife, an accomplished and amiable girl, comes into a magnificent fortune "of £350,000 in the funds, large West India property, eighteen dwelling houses in one street, seventeen in another, half-a-dozen manors in one county, a large landed estate in another, besides diamonds and plate, mortgages and leases, bonds, bills, securities, &c.;"—well, this gentleman, so richly endowed by nature and fortune, is brought forth to show how inferior such a parvenu is to the old aristocracy. And how did Hook manage the contrast? positively by comparing the dinners given by the upstart, with those provided by the wealthy peer! Hear the delicate distinctions between the veritable *beau monde*, and the low people of the Burton Danvers class!

"This sounds strange, but it is true, and I and every other man who mixes in society perceive it, that wealth, inordinate and immense as it may be, cannot give the *tact*, the manner of doing things. In the midst of the golden dishes and golden vases, there is always some mistake at such dinners, some little blunder, which neither the master, nor the mistress of the house can hope to rectify on any future occasion, not being conscious of anything wrong; for instance, the butlers stand looking at each other, in attitudes with dishes in their hands, waiting for signals, and hesitating where to put them down; there is always a dreadful uncertainty about the wine; Lunel is detected in a long-necked bottle up to his chin in an ice-pail, presuming to do duty for St. Peray, absent without leave; the Claret is frozen hard, the Hock left luke-warm, and common red Port put down upon the table as if people were to drink it; the fish is generally doubtful, the *entrées* cold, and the *soufflets* flat and heavy; while the want of regularity in the dinner pervades even the guests, and one has to sit opposite two or three odd-looking persons (connexions of the family who must be asked) with coarse neck-cloths and great red hands, with gold rings upon their fingers; people who go to

the horrid lengths of eating with their knives and calling for porter. In short, there is always some drawback, some terrible qualifier in the affair, which it would be difficult distinctly to define, but which invariably gives the *air bourgeois* to all the attempts of upstart wealth to imitate the tone and manner of the aristocracy of our country." So this is the difference between the adored aristocracy and the despised commonalty! The menials of the one—the cooks and the butlers—excel those of the other! A lord's gentleman's gentleman is sure to be of a better *style* than the valet of a commoner! A duke's *soufflets* are certain to be perfect, but a vile banker's invariably are put on the table flat and heavy. Well said, Jeames! thou speakest according to thy light!

The profound view of life taken by the writer of the foregoing extract, may be regarded as a fair sample of the philosophy of his fictions. Much as Hook prided himself on being 'the man of the world,' he was by no means well acquainted with human nature. If he understood any section of it, it was the aristocracy of our own country, but we incline to the belief that he was ignorant of the best, and acquainted only with the worst features of that class. To detect the beauty and dignity of humble life he was altogether unfitted; heroism, refinement, chivalric virtues were, in his opinion, not to be found remote from the dwellings of 'the great and distinguished.' A few of his novels are interesting; one—"Gilbert Gurney"—is unquestionably good, as a rattling story of broad humour and extreme farce. The materials of which it was made (and this may be said of all his books), were the incidents of his own life, or those that had occurred to his friends. Many of the best *jeux d'esprit* were, like the joke of 'the chest,' borrowed from the current wit of society; and in the case of one good story, the author was laudably conscientious in asking permission to use it of the person whom he regarded as the owner. In conversation, as well as in his books, Hook was not merely the diffuser of

his own rare wit, but also the disseminator of that of others. He was a professional story-teller (and an unrivalled master he was in that art), and when he rattled forth a string of good anecdotes, he knew that his hearers would only be bored by his honesty, if he said 'Barham told me this' and 'Canon gave me that.'

With the exception of "Gilbert Gurney" and one or two others, Hook's numerous novels were of a very second-rate quality. *Most* of them have signs here and there of the powerful intellect of the man who penned them; but *some*, for rambling vapidness and unillumined dullness, would have discredited the "Minerva Press." Still, it is wonderful how he found time to compose them, and dash them off into manuscript. As earnest labourers in literature well know, scraps of time—half-hours before luncheon—odd minutes between exciting interviews—are not sufficient, even in the employment of a mighty intellect, for the achievement of great things. It is not by his novels, however, that Hook's powers of mind must be judged of. To realize him as he appeared to the early patrons of "John Bull," we must read his best political articles and 'squibs,' and put faith in the young tradition society cherishes of his brilliant endowments.

When Hook was liberated from the King's Bench he was about thirty-seven years old; and between that time and his death, a space elapsed of about sixteen years, which were spent in the manner we have attempted to describe. In 1831, he was so embarrassed that he was forced to give up his expensive establishment in Cleveland Row. He moved to a retired and pleasant cottage on the banks of the Thames, at Fulham, near the palace; and there, when at home, he resided till his death in 1841.

Long before that date he experienced the first torments of a ruined constitution, but he did not alter his mode of life. To the last his animal spirits, sustained by artificial stimulus, were the wonder and delight of his friends. He jested even while he felt the chill of the grave steal over him.

The inroads of dissipation and disease on his personal appearance were great, and he was too vain a man not to feel such disfigurement acutely. To a few intimates he tried to jest about the change which had robbed him of a graceful figure, sunny locks, and a peculiarly pleasant face, and substituted for them a pot-belly, flabby cheeks, and a bald crown; but in public he was got up with laborious attention to effect,—he was laced, and bandaged, and padded, so that by candle-light he still had the bearing of ‘an exquisite,’ and when his eye twinkled, as the champagne passed and his *bon-mots* followed it, old friends were reminded of the Theodore Hook of five-and-twenty years before.

At the opening and early part of the season of 1841 Theodore was in the active performance of his social duties, but soon after it ended, he was no more. In the diary of that year there is the following entry—“Sunday, June 20th—To-day ill—but in to dinner to Lord Harrington’s to meet the Duke of Wellington. There D. and Duchess of Bedford, Lord and Lady Southampton, Lord Londonderry, Lord Canterbury, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Redesdale, Lord Charleville, Lord Strangford, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, Count D’Orsay, Lord Chesterfield, and Fitzroy Stanhope. I and Lord Canterbury away early—go for five minutes to Carlton.” He had not many more Sundays left him to spend in such society.

On the 14th of July he dined at the house of Major Shadwell Clerke, in Brompton Grove. The dinner was nearly over when he appeared. He ate nothing but fruit, and drank several large glasses of brandy and champagne, mixed in equal proportions, into which draughts he threw some effervescing powder which he called his *fizzick*. Once more he tried to be gay, but he could not succeed;—the power had gone from out that poor broken man of laughter. As he stood in the drawing-room, shortly afterwards with his coffee in his hand, he surveyed himself in a mirror, and with

affecting gravity said, "Ay, I see I look as I am—done up in purse, in mind, and in body too at last." He never went again into society.

His gay life had for long been a sad one. His biographers building on a few passages of his diary have tried to prove him the victim of an unfortunate attachment. Our estimate of Hook's character will not allow us to think him ever capable of true, earnest, chivalric love. But, be this as it may, he had, without the anguish of wronged affection, enough sources of misery—in the distressing harass for money he continually laboured under, in the consideration of his children unprovided for, and in that 'little grain of conscience' which was ever reminding him of his degradation.

He had now to leave this world. Towards the middle of August, in 1841, he sent for his friend, the Reverend G. R. Gleig, the chaplain of Chelsea Hospital, and now Chaplain General of the Army. Mr. Gleig, who, strange to say, had never been in Hook's house, though he was his old acquaintance, obeyed the summons, and was abruptly admitted to the dying man. Hook was up, but had not finished his toilet, and for a few minutes he showed signs of vexation at being discovered as he *really* was. With an effort, however, he recovered himself, and said to his clerical visitor, "Well, you see me as I am at last—all the bucklings, and paddings, and washings, and brushings, dropt for ever—a poor old grey-haired man, with my belly about my knees." He was too much exhausted for serious conversation, and the important business which had induced him to send for his friend was not touched upon.

On hearing of the condition of his distinguished neighbour, the Bishop of London called, and wrote to offer his spiritual services, but the delirium precedent on death had seized the doomed man before the arrival of the episcopal letter. Theodore Edward Hook died on the 24th instant,

during the evening, having not quite completed his 53rd year.

His debts were very great—much more so than his friends anticipated. His effects sold for £2,500, which sum was of course paid into the hands of the Tory Lords of the Treasury, whose zealous servant he had been ; and his wretched paramour, and five children (two girls and three boys) were left without a penny. On hearing of their calamitous position a few, *but only a few*, of Hook's friends subscribed an amount somewhat under £3,000 for them. Of this sum the King of Hanover gave £500,—“ a good deed ” which, in the surrounding iniquity of his Majesty's life, certainly shines out brightly on a naughty world. With the exception of this liberal donation the subscription was mostly made by men of small means and of Hook's own rank in life. More than a few wealthy nobles declined on moral grounds to give their mite to the support of ‘ such a woman ’ and ‘ the offspring of such a union ! ’ Of the conduct of these high-born censors there can be but one opinion ;—for when *are* moral scruples to be respected, if they are to be lightly esteemed when they stand forth to keep guard over our money ?

We are aware that the tone we have adopted in this memoir of Hook will displease many, and that we have laid ourselves open to the reproach of forgetting the artist in our anxiety to pass judgment on the man. There are cases in which such a reproof would be to a certain extent just. We are ready to admit that the critic of Byron should confine his remarks to that poet's works, and not rest long on his domestic squabbles and the foolish debaucheries for which he was punished with premature old age. When discussing Coleridge we can dwell on his writings and philosophy, and forget the poor unstable rogue who left his wife and children to be nurtured by others, while he went about borrowing money to supply himself with opium. But Hook, though a novelist, did nothing for his art ; if he influenced it at all

his influence was an unhealthy one. As we said at the commencement of this sketch, his peculiar art, to which he adhered with fidelity, was that of shining in society. Literature was to him only a means of 'getting money.' He was emphatically "the man of the world," "the man of pleasure"—and as such we have considered him!

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

ONE day towards the end of the last century in the crowd that hurried with equal speed and noise, along one of the busiest thoroughfares in London, might have been seen (in the language of historical romances) wending a leisurely way, a handsome, portly gentleman, approaching the middle age, who led by the hand a delicate little girl—his daughter and only child. In his eye there was a merry mischievous light indicative of high animal spirits, and in his fine features were unmistakeable signs, that he loved pleasure and partook of it at times—perchance to excess whenever he had an opportunity of doing so. But ever and anon as he looked down on the little damsel, who stepped lightly by his side, an expression of fatherly tenderness came over his countenance, that spoke emphatically of the amiability of his disposition.

Diverging from the main street, the two turned down a dark and narrow lane that was less obstructed with traffic, and entered a close dingy office, into and out of which people with anxious and excited faces passed rapidly.

A strange business, as it seemed to the child's observant mind, was carried on there. It was a place for the buying and selling of little bits of card-paper with numbers stamped on them. In short it was a lottery-ticket office. We have grown a moral people since then, and can speak of such things as we walk down Pall-Mall without blushing.

"Mary," said the father to his tiny companion, "you are ten years old to-day, and I am going to give you a birthday present,"

The child's face brightened up.

"I will give you one of those tickets," continued the father with the wary eagerness of an inveterate gambler, flitting over his countenance, and making his lips twitch. "You may choose which you like ;—and perhaps it will bring you a fortune, and make you quite a rich lady."

Promptly the child put forth her hand, and touched a certain one out of a litter of tickets.

"Ah," said the father, examining it, "you must choose again. I want to buy a whole ticket; and this is only a quarter. Choose, again my pet."

"No, papa—I like this one best," replied Mary, firmly.

"Here is the next number, 2223," said the keeper of the lottery-office.

"Ay," said papa, "that will do just as well. Will it not Mary? We'll take that."

"No," was the obstinate answer, "that wont do. This is my birth-day you know, papa, and I am ten years old. Cast up my number—No. 2224—and you'll find that makes *ten*; No. 2223 makes only *nine*."

It now appeared that the other shares of the ticket were in the office, so the omen was accepted and the child's whim humoured. No. 2224 was bought, and the purchasers of that dubious property left the shop.

The gentleman was Dr. Mitford—a man whom every one liked, and was ready to lend money to, even without a chance of being repaid. He was of the ancient Northumberland family, which a popular rhyme speaks of with eulogy.

"Midford was Midford when Morpeth was nane,
Midford shall be Midford when Morpeth is gane ;
So long as the sun sets or the moon runs round,
A Midford in Midford shall always be found."

He was a physician with innumerable friends and no patients. Soon after concluding his professional education

which he commenced as a house pupil of John Hunter, and closed with graduating in medicine at Edinburgh, he married the heiress of the Rev. Dr. Russell, of Ashe in Hampshire, a beneficed clergyman. The lady brought him a house and a small landed estate, and twenty-eight thousand pounds in money; and he had besides this a comfortable property of his own. Settlements the young lady would not hear of; her Mitford should have everything that was hers—and he complied with her desire, insisting however on settling £200 per annum on her out of his own estate. Though so well endowed, Dr. Russell determined not to relinquish the practice of a profession for which he was in many respects admirably qualified; but the fees he received never added much to his income. He was too prosperous and proud a man to exercise the arts of ingratiating and sycophancy, which are as a *general rule* necessary to the success of a physician who has not super-eminent mental powers and acquirements. His time was principally occupied with the gaieties of society, in which he shone to advantage. He was a bold rider and a lover of expensive horses, a first-rate whist-player and fond of all games of chance, a charming companion in the field, over the bottle, or in the ball-room. With a hot and unruly temper, he was always involved in quarrels and disputes, and yet was universally liked. He was restless and excitable, moving from one place to another as hope of getting practice, or making agreeable friends instigated. Fortune favoured him wonderfully, as she often does those who do not deserve her aid; but he was a reckless fellow, and never acquired enough prudence to take care of his luck.

That such a man should come to grief will excite no surprise. Piece by piece every bit of his property slipped through his fingers; and when he entered the lottery-office with his child he was in debt, and without any resource whatever save his professional knowledge, and the £200 per

annum settled on his wife. At that time he was in London, in part hiding from his creditors, and partly in order that he might furbish up his medical information at the hospitals, and see if his friend Dr. Babington could put him in the way of earning a few guineas.

Strange to say No. 2224 won £20,000. But at the end of twenty years nothing was left of the birthday *present*, which papa kindly helped little Mary to spend, except a Wedgwood dinner service with the Mitford crest on it. The result of this foolish extravagance and improvidence was, that when Mary became a woman she had to support herself and her parents by her pen.

She was born at Alresford, Hampshire, in 1789—the *Annual Register* says in 1786, but that must be a misprint. She died at Swallowfield Cottage, near Reading, on the 10th of January, 1855. In her “*Recollections of a Literary Life*” there are many pleasing pictures of her happy childhood. She was educated at Chelsea, from ten to fifteen, in the same school where “L. E. L.” was for a brief period, and which had Lady Caroline Lamb for a pupil. While there it was her father’s humour that she had a genius for every pursuit, and consequently, though she was totally devoid of ear, was tortured by a succession of music masters. Mr. Hook, “a large, smooth-faced, good-natured, and civil-spoken man,” the father of the brilliant and modish Theodore, was one of her tutors. But she never made much progress in the art of music, though she was compelled to weary her poor little fingers over the keys of a piano, and the strings of a harp. During this course of pupilage, however, she was taken frequently to the theatre, and conceived an ardent love for dramatic entertainments. She read Shakspeare, learnt the more striking parts, and spouted and mouthed them enthusiastically in imitation of John Kemble, Bannister, Fawcett, Mrs. Davenport, Miss Pope, and Mrs. Jordan. She read, moreover, with a fervid brain, Molière and Voltaire. On quit-

ting school, she not only retained but fostered her theatrical predilections; and every third year of her life, she was for some time called upon to enter with hearty earnestness into the mimic undertakings at the Reading Grammar School. The boys at that seminary, under the guidance of that fine scholar and gentleman, Dr. Valpy, used, at the Triennial Visitations of the heads of certain Oxford colleges, to perform a Greek play, in the manner of the Westminster boys. Miss Russell was always required to write the grand official critique for the "Reading Mercury." It was true she knew nothing of Greek, but her good friend, the Doctor, put into her hands Brumoy's "Théâtre des Grecs," and gave her general directions as to what remarks ought to be made. The excellences of each of the actors, her own amiable nature enabled her to detect and expatiate upon. One circumstance connected with those representations she mentioned towards the close of her life with much humour. The boys acted the female parts to perfection, indeed better than those of the male characters; in voice, gesture, and plaintive tenderness of tone, manner, and expression, the school always abounded in superlative Greek heroines, but their hands were *so brown*! The Visitation was in October, and the cricket and the boating of the summer months caused the young ladies to have very horny and sun-burnt fists.

What wonder that Miss Mitford reared under such influences should turn out a dramatist? Her career in authorship, apart from the criticisms in the "Reading Mercury," began at an early age. Shortly after leaving school she published a volume of miscellaneous poems, which was followed by "Christine, the Maid of the South Seas," a metrical tale founded on the story of the discovery of the Mutineers of the Bounty (a subject afterwards handled in "The Island" by Lord Byron), and by some poems on female character. These *three* juvenile attempts were all

made and published to the world within two years. They had a certain degree of success, but were severely handled in some organs of criticism, especially in the "Quarterly," where their author's pretensions to poetical honours were lashed and smashed with unreasonable and brutal harshness.

Though Miss Mitford was destined to achieve her celebrity as an author in the domain of prose narrative, it was distinction as a dramatic writer that she was especially desirous of gaining. Her plays had a certain amount of success, and perhaps on the whole deserved it, but they cost her infinite toil and vexation ere they afforded her any of the gratifications of triumph, and had they been her only contributions to literature, the chances in favour of her name being retained in the memory of men would be slight indeed. Our ambitious attempts are not always our most successful. Not by her tragedies, to produce which she strained every power of her mind, but by her simple tales—so simple that few but accomplished artists could discern their *artistic* excellence—she will be known hereafter. Praise bestowed by Coleridge on "Blanche," one of Miss Mitford's early poems, impelled her to make an essay at dramatic composition. She first wrote a comedy in blank verse, founded on a story from a French *feuilleton*, and had the gratification of having it rejected by the manager to whom she offered it; she converted the piece with all speed into an opera, and had it again returned to her hands. Not a pleasant commencement this to the arduous undertaking of dramatic authorship! She next wrote a five-act tragedy on the story of "Fiesco," but on its completion she was so conscious of its great and many defects, that she could not summon up sufficient courage or rashness to offer it to any manager. Disheartened and gloomily debating whether it would not be wise to bid farewell to her ambition, she was cheered and reinvigorated by the kindly encouragement of Talfourd, then a young man,

and a candidate for those high honours he won, and so gracefully wore. It was natural for Talfourd to feel a warm interest in her endeavours, for he had been educated at the Reading school. Once more she selected a subject, and after careful study and much thought, set to work at it. The result was "Foscari," a tragedy in five acts; "Julian," another tragedy in five acts followed; then came "Rienzi" and "Charles the First," also tragedies in five acts. Besides these dramas, Miss Mitford produced "Sadak and Kalusrade," an opera, "Inez de Castro," a tragedy in five acts, "Gaston de Blondville," a romantic drama in three acts, and "Otto of Wittelsbach," a tragedy in five acts, and numerous dramatic scenes. None of these last-mentioned dramas have, we believe, been put on the stage; but the four first named were all represented, and met with a flattering reception. But ere she contrived to force them through all green-room obstacles to the boards, the author underwent mortifications, absurd enough to look back upon, but cruelly bitter at the time of their experience. To humour the fancies and comply with "the criticisms" of actors, she positively wrote no less than five last scenes for "Foscari;" and the vexation and annoyance "Rienzi" brought upon her, would have driven most ladies into a madhouse. For *four years*,* think of this ye irritable authors who want for your toil a quick return of praise and pudding!—for four years it lay at Covent Garden, and after all was rejected by that house. It then was sent to Drury Lane, where after much further delay it was performed—not on account of its own excellences, but because the character of Claudia, the daughter of Rienzi, was considered suitable for "a young lady who was about to come out" at that theatre. Eventually this tragedy was very successful, more so than any other of

* "Foscari" also lay *four years* at Covent Garden before it was accepted.

Miss Mitford's dramas ; it created "a sensation," and became "the rage." Apart from its dramatic merits it was useful as an instrument of historical education, for the public were in an amusing state of ignorance concerning its hero. A learned dignitary of the law asked Miss Mitford with solemn simplicity if such a person had ever existed ; and another distinguished personage told her that as he was about to go into the country he should take the *first* volume of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" with him, in order to compare the dramatist's with the historian's conception of the man. If doubt as to who Rienzi was has been dispelled, there is nevertheless prevalent some confusion as to the authorship of the tragedy. We have often heard it spoken of as Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's—or as a dramatic version of his novel ; and the compiler of the index to the Edinburgh Reviews (who of course must be a *very* great man—in his way) has lent his countenance to this error, by giving a reference to "Bulwer—length of time his tragedy of 'Rienzi' lay at the theatre before acted, lvii, 309."

But the increasing pecuniary difficulties of her father urged on Miss Mitford the necessity of exerting herself in some department of literature, where she would not have to wait four years for payment for her labour—and then, perhaps, see it turn to no profit. The climax of Dr. Mitford's disasters was the winning a chancery suit ; the victory cost him somewhere about ten thousand pounds, and ruined him. "Julian," the first of the tragedies to fight its way to the stage, was produced in 1823. In 1824 was published the first volume of "Our Village, Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery," which was followed by four more volumes, the fifth appearing in 1832. "Our Village" was succeeded by "Belford Regis;" the market-town sketches, for which Reading (nigh to which town was her residence, Swallowfield Cottage) supplied the painter with subjects. In 1852 was published "The Recollections of a Literary Life," and in 1854, "Atherton, and other Tales."

It has been said with much propriety that Miss Mitford is a prose Cowper, without his gloom or bitterness; in the same way she might be termed a prose Crabbe, without his harshness and sternness. We all know her village tales; there is scarce a grown person in England or America, capable of reading with ease, who has not perused them—with at least a sense of placid delight. They are by no means exciting; to the restlessness that ever craves for strong as well as new emotions, there is in them a tranquil composure that is to the last degree irritating. Perhaps it would not be right to speak warmly of their truthfulness, for the ill-favoured and repulsive features of rural life are carefully softened down, or—kept out of sight. And yet both the characters and scenes impress us with their actuality, we know them all in our individual experiences—the village worthies, the school-children, the dogs, the hedge-rows, and smiling pasturages; if they are ideal, they belong to that ideal world which we all can call up for our refreshment from the memories of childhood's first sensations. It spoke well for the heart of the country, those gentle pictures of the beauty that is common being so universally received with delight; and their immense popularity in America is an affecting indication of the community of sentiment existing between ourselves and our trans-Atlantic cousins. To the current prose literature—the silver-fork fictions and Hook's roistering novels—that surrounded them, those tales bore the same relation that Wordsworth's poetry did to *Childe Harold* and *The Loves of the Angels*. Indeed Miss Mitford, though she lacked the philosophic depth and breadth of the author of "The Excursion," more resembled Wordsworth than either Cowper or Crabbe.

CHAPTER IX.

MARGUERITE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON

Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, was one of the six children of a certain Edmund Power, Esq., of Knockbrit, in the county of Tipperary, and afterwards of Clonmel. With the great pretensions to gentle descent which are usually found in Irishmen of no very illustrious origin, with a handsome exterior, debauched morals, and brutal tastes, this gentleman was a type of *county* Irishism in the last century. He fought duels, drank, gambled, defamed the character of his neighbours, behaved with coarseness to his wife and with cruelty to his children, even tried his hand at murder—and eventually after a long career of sin and infamy closed an old age of ignominious dependence without evincing one sign of penitence. There was a completeness in the blackguardism of this scamp, which renders it highly dramatic and interesting. As a young man he was “the buck” of all Tipperary, and wherever he went, from hall to cabin, his fine figure and swagger, white cravats, superabundant frills and ruffles, leather breeches, and top boots, excited enthusiastic applause, and gained him the honourable titles of “Beau Power” and “Shiver the Frills.” He married the daughter of the judicially murdered Edmund Sheehy, and after the first illusions of love had vanished he used to employ his muscular arm in administering correction to that poor lady, and during the infliction of the punishment would playfully remind her that she was the daughter of a convicted rebel. As his small estate at Knockbrit gave him a few hundreds a year, like a spirited Irish gentleman

he lived up to as many thousands, just as, if his income had been measurable by thousands, he would have dissipated tens of thousands.

Marguerite, the third child of this interesting ruffian, was born on the 1st of September, 1790. The exact date of her birth has indeed been disputed, and is involved in a little of that obscurity which often surrounds ladies' ages, but the above is the date given in Miss Power's memoir of her aunt. About 1796-97 the consequences of his extravagances compelled her father to leave Knockbrit, and settle in the adjoining provincial town of Clonmel. Mr. Power's pursuits in Clonmel were very much what a writer of fiction would appoint to so amiable and right-minded a gentleman under like circumstances. He became proprietor of a local newspaper, which brought him into many scrapes and actions for libel; he went into business as a corn and butter dealer—or in Miss Power's language, "he entered into partnership with Messrs. Hunt and O'Brian, of Waterford, *in a general* mercantile way;" and having throughout his career manifested a lively care for the best interests of society, he now distinguished himself for such activity in hunting down the poor rebels, as they were called, that he was made a magistrate for the counties of Tipperary and Waterford. He was a man as richly endowed with physical courage as with moral cowardice, and in scouring the country on horseback and encountering the most desperate members of a ferocious and injured peasantry he found a congenial excitement. It was in the April of 1807 that, accompanied by his eldest son, a gentle and noble youth who loathed the sport of man-hunting in which he was compelled to take a part, Mr. Power was riding at the fall of evening on one of his rebel-tracking excursions, when he saw in the distance a poor lad hurrying along and bearing a pitch-fork to the blacksmith's to be mended. The sight of such an unusual object in an agricultural district aroused

the magistrate's suspicions, and he called on the boy to stop and surrender himself. Alarmed at the summons, and perhaps more than usually timid at the approach of night, the lad ran forward to fly from danger. No further proof of his being a rebel could be needed; the magistrate spurred his horse, soon overtook the fugitive, raised a pistol, and with a deliberate aim shot him. In a few hours the poor boy was dead, and suspended before the Clonmel gaol to scare the populace into love for the paternal government under which they dwelt. On enquiry it was found that the victim of Mr. Power's zeal had been a steady, hard-working youth, in no way connected with the discontented and turbulent of the neighbourhood, and was the only child of a poor widow. Strange to say this occurrence, in no respect more horrible than incidents which in that ill-fated land were being continually perpetrated in the light of day and with general approval, aroused the indignation of the neighbourhood, and attracted the attention of the authorities. Edmund Power, Esq., was brought to trial for the murder of the boy Lonergan. In such a condition were the finances of the accused that he did not know where to look for money with which to engage a counsel for his defence, till a friend supplied him with £50. The result of the legal proceedings was, of course, the acquittal of the prisoner at the bar, but his name was erased from the roll of magistrates. The later part of this man's life was consistent with its commencement. After sinking from grade to grade in poverty and degradation in Clonmel he moved to Dublin, where his wife, stricken with grief and years, died. With so good a conjugal reputation, of course Mr. Power found another woman to marry him; he took for his second wife the widow of a Limerick brewer, but it does not appear that this step was for the happiness of either party.

Mr. Power continued to reside in Dublin, living on an allowance of £120 a-year given him by two of his daughters,

till he died in the early part of 1837, at the age of seventy years. In the last months of his life he was in such a deplorable state that he was "unable to make the slightest movement without screaming and groaning with agony;" but this extreme of bodily torment did not scare him into remorse for his sins. The evening preceding his death, he drained his customary four or five tumblers of punch, and with his last breath he boasted of the creditable feat.

The domestic life of Clonmel was a bad education to the six children of this drunken butter-dealing magistrate, who ruled his offspring with a rod of iron, and reduced his weak-minded wife to be the slave of his violent temper. But a brilliant destiny was in store for more than one of the nurslings; and if they made some desperate efforts to free themselves from the slough and ignominy of their youth, who shall blame them?" Anne Power, the eldest daughter, died in her tenth year; Michael, who saw his father murder the boy Lonergan, died early in the West Indies, while a Captain of the 2nd West India Regiment; Marguerite became the Countess of Blessington; Ellen took for her second husband Viscount Canterbury, formerly the popular speaker of the House of Commons; Robert entered the army, and quitted it in 1823, after attaining the position of Captain of the 30th Regiment of Foot; and Mary Anne, in 1831, became the wife of the Count de St. Marsault.

Beauty was the heritage of this family, the only gift besides life which their father gave them. The girls were especially beautiful, and while yet children, in spite of their father's ill-fame, received homage as the belles of Clonmel. The only education they had received was obtained in a school where they were debarred from cultivating tambour embroidery and other accomplishments, by a preceptress indignant at the irregularity with which Mr. Power paid his bills; but they had better endowments than a smattering of French and proficiency in needle-work,—they had

forms of exquisite grace, features of the most refined beauty and intellectual expression, radiant loveliness, commanding carriage, dignified address. In every way they had the impress of belonging to nature's aristocracy. The admiration bestowed on them soon attracted the invidious censure of rivals thrice their age, and it would appear that their conduct in some respects exposed them to the reproof of justice as well as the carpings of envy, but they were such children in age that their giddiness and indiscretion were readily pardoned by the charitable. Without a doubt, Miss Marguerite and Miss Ellen Power were too ready to join the young officers quartered in Clonmel for romantic walks by moonlight, and to flirt outrageously at the "Clonmel Assemblies," or "Coteries" as they were called, but in their excuse the kindly were ever ready to urge their careless training, the evil influences of their home presided over by their brutal father and cowed mother, and their extreme youth; Marguerite being but fourteen and Ellen fifteen years of age.

Such was Marguerite's age, when she was pursued by two lovers, Captain Murray and Captain Farmer. The latter gentleman was successful in obtaining her hand, but not her heart; in after life she declared that even before he proposed to her, she knew that he had within him the seeds of madness, but she was compelled to accept his hand by her father, who threatened her with dire punishments in case of disobedience, and whose threats she knew well were ever followed by action. The wedding was consummated ere she had completed her fifteenth year, and according to her account the treatment she received at the hands of her husband was incredibly brutal; he beat her, kept her under lock and key, and starved her. After living with him for three years she ran away from him, and never returned to his stern guardianship. Captain Farmer, after a time, quitted his regiment, and went to East India in the Company's

service, asking his wife to accompany him—an invitation which she declined. After passing some years in the East he returned to England about the year 1816, and in the October of 1817 met with his death in a rather inglorious fashion. Having received some post in the service of the Spanish patriots, Captain Maurice Farmer, before quitting England, went, like a jolly good fellow, to say farewell to some friends confined in the King's Bench Prison. After consuming four quarts of rum the jovial party determined that their dear friend Farmer was bound in honour not to quit the prison at the hour when visitors were expected to depart—in a word, ought not to think of going home till the next morning. To this Captain Farmer objected; his friends butted, rebutted, sur-rebutted by locking the door; instead of joining issue, the Captain effected one out of the window, and standing on the parapet threatened to leap down if he was not allowed egress through the door. While speaking to this effect the poor wretch lost his balance, and, before the blank, staring eyes of his drunken associates, fell with a *thud* into the court below. He was conveyed to the Middlesex Hospital with a broken arm, a fractured thigh, and effusion of blood on the brain. In due course he died, and a coroner's jury decided that—"The deceased came to his death by accidentally falling from a window in the King's Bench Prison, when in a state of intoxication." The humorous part of this cheerful, pleasant little episode is still to be told. *Because* Captain Farmer was so foolish as to intoxicate himself with rum, and so unfortunate as to meet when in that state with injuries resulting in death, his compotators were all sentenced to one month's solitary confinement in Horsemonger Lane Gaol;—a judicial proceeding which is at least a happy exemplification of our national liking to finish a row with hanging somebody.

In justice to the memory of this unlucky drunkard, it must be stated that there were two sides to the story of his

matrimonial troubles. His wife was pleased to regard him as a madman, but ladies when they differ from their lords are only too ready to institute commissions *de lunatico*; Lady Byron, for instance, thought Bedlam a fitter place of retirement than Venice for the father of her child. And as to the charge of beating black and blue, some bodies turn black and blue on a very slight pressure; and the conjugal playfulness, even of a Rigaud, has been perversely represented to be cruelty. It must not be forgotten that Captain Farmer's family strongly sided with him in his quarrel with his wife; and his brother, in a letter published in the "Evening Packet," gave a flat contradiction to all the important statements made against the Captain in Miss Power's memoirs of her aunt. In that letter it is declared that Miss Marguerite Power did not prefer Captain Murray to Captain Farmer, that her affections were in no way forced, that Captain Farmer at no time of his life evinced symptoms of insanity, that Mrs Farmer refused to accompany her husband to India on the plea, not of fearing his violence but of dreading the effects of the climate on her constitution, that when the Captain was in India, her conduct was so notoriously scandalous that old Mr. Farmer (Captain Farmer's father) refused to see her; and, lastly, that it was her infidelity which drove her husband to the pernicious habit of excessive indulgence in ardent drinks, which led to such a fatal result. Certainly this is a strong counter-statement, and as far as we can learn, it has never yet been proved untrue. Perhaps in this instance we shall do right in dividing the faults of this matrimonial disaster equally between husband and wife, not forgetting to make every excuse for the latter on the ground of her youth, inexperience, and defective education.

What was Mrs. Farmer's course between flitting from the dominion of her first husband and his death, is by no means apparent. We hear of her tarrying at brief periods,

now at one place, now at another; but her movements are involved in a most suspicious obscurity. When she declined accompanying her husband to India, he liberally gave her £500—the exact half of all he possessed in the world. Somewhere during this period she visited France, once if not twice, but what doing, and how supporting herself, we are not informed. In 1807, she was living apart from her husband; in 1809, she was sojourning in Dublin; next, she is heard of in Hampshire; and in 1816, she was living in Manchester-square, in London, with her brother Robert, and there, amongst other guests, she received at her table the Earl of Blessington.

How she came to Manchester-square, or how the daughter and son of a penniless bankrupt obtained the means of dwelling in a fashionable square, we cannot say. Miss Power, lightly sketching over this part of her aunt's career, only says, "Circumstances having at last induced Mrs. Farmer to fix upon London as a residence, *she established herself in a house* in Manchester-square, where, with her brother Robert (Michael had died some years previously), she remained for a considerable period."

The accident which caused the death of Captain Farmer made his wife a Countess. The Earl of Blessington no sooner heard of the event than he offered his hand in marriage to the widow, and was accepted. The world talked and talked about the impending marriage in high life; but all the same for that the wedding ceremony was performed, and on the 16th of February, in 1818, Mrs. Farmer became the Countess of Blessington,—just about four months after the death of her first husband.

The Earl of Blessington's great-grandfather was the notorious Luke Gardiner, who commenced life in a livery on the footboard of a carriage, and attained to great wealth, the dignity of a privy councillor, and the hand in marriage of Anne, sole daughter and heiress of the Honourable

Alexander Stewart, second son of William, first Viscount Mountjoy. An impoverished peer, whose agreeable genius had been stimulated by disappointment, is reported to have asked his right honourable friend, as he was entering his carriage, "How does it happen, Gardiner, you never make a mistake, and get up behind?" "Some people, my lord," replied the ex-footman, "who have been long accustomed to going in, remain at last on the outside, and can neither get in nor up again."

On the death of Lord Mountjoy, the estates of the Stewart family (of the royal stock) devolved on Charles, the son of Luke Gardiner, the privy councillor, and in the person of the said Charles's son (Luke the Second) the title of Mountjoy was renewed. The footman's grandson was made Baron Mountjoy in 1789, and Viscount Mountjoy in 1795; he died three years after arriving at the latter dignity, and was succeeded by a son, the Right Honourable Charles John Gardiner, who, in 1809, was elected a representative peer for Ireland, and was created Earl of Blessington on the 22nd of June, 1816.

The course of this nobleman, who was a novelist, was one of splendid folly. He does not appear to have been otherwise than a kindly and honourable gentleman, but his luxurious indulgence and passion for display were in the opinion of many sure indications of mental derangement. Only in his seventeenth year, when, on his father's death, he came into early possession of the title and the estates, which afforded him a clear revenue of between £20,000 and £30,000 per annum, he conceived a strong liking for the stage, and, after much careful and laborious practice, became a superior actor, for an amateur. For some years he entertained his Irish friends at Mountjoy Forest with theatrical performances on a scale of ridiculous splendour. Actors were brought at an enormous cost from London and Dublin, thousands of pounds were expended on the decorations

of the theatre and the purchase of costumes, and an extravagant hospitality was administered to the guests who came to witness the plays. Nor was this theatrical mania the only foible on which the young nobleman squandered his paternal wealth. Petted from childhood and ignorant of moral restraint, he gratified the whim of the moment without any regard to the expense entailed by indulging his fancy. Of quick and shifting impulses, and of infirm volition, he was devoid of perseverance, save in the pursuit of trifles which seemed beyond his reach. If he fell in love with a horse, a magnificent stage-dress, a picture, or a woman, he bid for it, as if the preservation of life depended on his obtaining it. He could even be faithful to a woman till he had won her. Not that he was incapable of a lasting affection, for he loved passionately both his wives; but with him an affection was fleeting, just in proportion as it reached its object with ease. His first wife was a lady who, when she first made his acquaintance, was the wife of a Major Browne. After much solicitation, Mrs. Browne consented to become his lordship's mistress, and on the death of her husband (in 1812) she became Viscountess Mountjoy. The fruit of this connection consisted of two illegitimate children, John and Emily Rosalie, commonly called Lady Mary Gardiner, and two legitimate—Lady Harriett Anne Frances Gardiner (who married Count d'Orsay in 1829, and, secondly, the Hon. Charles Spencer Cowper, third son of the late Earl Cowper, in 1853), and the Right Hon. Luke Wellington, Viscount Mountjoy, born in 1814, and who died in his tenth year.

Lady Mountjoy had only a brief possession of her dearly purchased honours, for she died at St. Germain, in France, on the 9th of September, 1814. Her husband was by this event plunged into grief, the violence of which spoke more for his want of moral restraint than for the goodness of

his heart. His emotions found a characteristic relief in conveying his wife's remains to the tomb with a pomp which aroused the ridicule and displeasure of all (save the rabble) who witnessed it, and on which was lavished a sum between £3000 and £4000.

The widower did not long remain disconsolate. Again he fixed his affections on the wife of a soldier, living apart from her husband; and again, as soon as decency would permit after the death of the husband, he married the lovely widow. The title, however, which he bestowed on his second wife was not Viscountess Mountjoy, but Countess of Blessington; for between the death of his first wife and his second marriage, he had been advanced to the rank of an earl.

At this period Lady Blessington was in the brightest summer of her matchless beauty. In girlhood she was not esteemed so attractive as her sisters, but with womanly years her charms had developed into that loveliness which mocks the feebleness of imagination. Those who watched and were fascinated by her graces, tried in vain to analyze them, and say in what her witchery consisted. Her dazzlingly clear complexion, dark hair, and rich dark eyebrows and lashes, delicate features ever radiant with the warm light of her mirthful nature, small mouth and thin pink lips curling with playful irony, small white hands, tiny feet, and incomparable shape, were the theme of universal admiration, not less than her frank, generous, cordial manner, Irish in its heartiness, French in its piquancy, and English in its delicacy and refinement—and her rich, soft voice, which alike in laughter and in speech enlivened its hearers with a sense of new-found happiness. But what most elicited enthusiastic praise, was the perfect harmony of her entire appearance in rest and in action. The emotion of the moment was as manifest in her step, her form, her slightest alteration of attitude, as in her countenance. She was young and triumphant, gentle, and of a constitution natu-

rally mirthful; these were her halcyon days, every moment brought with it a fresh joy, and the delight she experienced, manifested in the strangely subtle language of her beauty, was itself the quality with which, beyond all her other charms, she swayed the affections and imaginations of her astonished and almost incredulous admirers.

Lady Blessington immediately became a celebrity of the highest fashion. As the wife of a popular nobleman, who not only possessed great wealth, but in expending it seemed to mistake his principal for income, she was surrounded with all that splendour which captivates the multitude; her beauty secured her the homage of every beholder; and her wit and tastes gathered round her all that was brilliant in intellect throughout the kingdom. Royal dukes were frequent visitors in her residence in St. James's Square, in which were received also, as honoured guests, statesmen and lawyers such as Canning, Castlereagh, Lansdowne, Palmerston and Lord John Russell, Brougham and Erskine. There, too, Kemble often was seen, in company with Matthews, and Wilkie, and Lawrence, whose art has preserved to us the life-like semblance of his beautiful hostess. To the dazzling assemblies of that palace, also, Rogers came, to move stealthily amongst the crowd, sneering and carping at all by turns, and admired as a cynic is ever sure to be. Another poet, in person almost as minute as the author of "Italy," but far richer in mental endowments, would arrest and at the same time animate the varied throng of belles, exquisites, and wits, as he recited rather than sang, with thrilling pathos, the tenderest of his "Irish Melodies." And, as the strain concluded, Luttrell would send forth the flashing impromptu he had been waiting an hour to deliver.

But to be the host of such bright festivities was irksome to Lord Blessington who, though still young and admired, was so sated with long and excessive indulgence that he had exhausted every source of pleasure, except that of

travel. He determined to bid adieu to England, and reside for a lengthened period in continental countries. The course that he took, accompanied by his army of cooks and ostentatious suite, we all know from Lady Blessington's "Idler in Italy" and "Idler in France," and the many published journals in which the gorgeous trifling and magnificent insanity of Luke Gardiner's descendant are described. From Paris to Italy, and, after the lapse of years, from Italy back again to Paris, they moved in a devious route, attended by all those aids to sensual delight with which the imagination adorns a picture of oriental luxury. Miss Mary Ann Power, Lady Blessington's youngest sister, and Charles Matthews, the distinguished comedian, then a lively and engaging youth, destined for the profession of architecture, were of the party at its first outset. In Italy they were joined by the Count D'Orsay, whose noble powers were wasted in dictating the foibles of fashion, and whose gentle nature and naturally warm heart were finally obscured and hardened by selfishness, though he never lost the manner of his original generosity. In 1823, while at Genoa, Lady Blessington became acquainted with Byron, and after the death of the poet, she gave the world a picture of him which was cruelly true, although inspired by the spite of wounded vanity. "Your other allies," Byron wrote to Moore, "whom I have found very agreeable personages, are Milor Blessington and *épouse*, travelling with a very handsome companion in the shape of a 'French Count' (to use Farquhar's phrase in the *Beaux Stratagem*), who has all the air of a *Cupidon déchainé*, and is one of the few specimens I have seen of our ideal of a Frenchman before the Revolution, an old friend with a new face, upon whose like I never thought we should look again." The French Count, in the course of time, acted a conspicuous part in English society. Of a commanding stature, a strikingly graceful figure, an aspect proud without an approach to stiffness, a face of peculiar comeliness and frank

expression, and an easy cordiality of manner that showed him to be as naturally amiable as he was naturally gifted and artificially polished—at a glance he was seen to be no common dandy. His physical strength and adroitness were unexampled; he was the master of all elegant accomplishments, and he possessed one of those happy intelligences which are ever at rest but never idle, and by which knowledge is acquired without labour; he was a bold rider, an expert swordsman, and a good shot; of his capabilities as an artist, his paintings, sculpture, and innumerable sketches testify; he had an agreeable voice, and an ample acquaintance with music; in conversation, his subtle humour and love of delicate irony, that never gave pain, made him a wit pre-eminent amongst wits. The art which Lady Blessington was remarkable for,—that of making all who approached her pleased with themselves,—he possessed in a yet higher degree; in society, he seemed perfectly unconscious of himself,—his own dignity, or style, or the universal admiration he elicited, never cost him a thought; the feeling always expressed in his countenance was one of lively pleasure in seeing once more the person—bore or no bore—with whom he happened to exchange words; the weak he always took under his protection; to dull companions he exhibited delicate forbearance; those who were attacked behind their backs he invariably defended; in the ball-room, where he was the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the highest fashion, it was remarked that the girls among whom he distributed his attentions were the plain and the portionless; to all appearance, he was unable to enjoy himself, save in giving enjoyment to others; he was capable of displaying hauteur and disdain to but one class of persons,—the representatives of vulgar wealth, purse-proud snobs—creatures alas! too plentiful in great London—he crushed beneath his heel. Such was the happy temperament of the man, that he never suffered from a moment's *ennui*, and could find as much amusement in the

dullest country town as in St. James's-street in the height of the season. Every man, however humble, he treated with respect and kindness: his tailor and his valet he addressed as if they were gentlemen, not disgraced by rendering him service; his dependents, from high to low, were particularly attached to him. And yet, this gifted being, so fertile in intellect,* so truly refined, and so amiable, consented to wreck his powers and wealth on the paltry ambition of fashionable notoriety—to give laws to tailors, and furnish designs for new carriages to Long Acre—could squander an enormous property at Crockford's and on knaves—could be faithless to a gentle wife, and could maintain a relation with that wife's mother, which charity could not disguise, and enmity would not care to misrepresent.

From Geneva, where they saw much (albeit Lady Blessington represented it as *much more*) of Byron, and Lord Blessington heard of the death of his son and heir, Lord Mountjoy; from Rome, where the Irish peer and his lady suffered much want of various luxuries, to them necessities, not to be procured in the holy city (where, on the 1st of December, 1827, the Count D'Orsay married the Lady Harriet Frances Gardiner, out of love to her father, the young lady being then only fifteen years and four months old)—from Venice and Milan, the Blessingtons retraced their steps to Paris, where they arrived in the June, 1828, and where they contemplated making a prolonged residence. They took the Hotel Ney, in the Rue de Bourbons, and fitted it up with furniture and decorations, the splendour of which astonished even Parisian upholsterers. The following description, from "The Idler in France," of the bed-room of her ladyship, and the dressing-room, may be regarded as a sample of the entire mansion. "The whole fitting up,"

* Count D'Orsay was a novelist, and, strange to say, [a firm believer in Alchemy!

says Lady Blessington, "is in exquisite taste ; and, as usual, when my most gallant of all gallant husbands, that it ever fell to the lot of happy woman to possess, interferes, no expense has been spared. The bed, which is silvered instead of gilt, rests on the backs of two large silver swans, so exquisitely sculptured that every feather is in alto-relievo, and looks as fleecy as those of the living bird. The recess in which it is placed is lined with white fluted silk, bordered with blue embossed lace ; and from the columns that support the frieze of the recess, pale blue silk curtains, lined with white, are hung, which, when drawn, conceal the recess altogether.

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"A silvered sofa has been made to fit the side of the room opposite the fire-place, near to which stands a most inviting *bergere*. An *escritoire* occupies one panel, a book-stand the other, and a rich coffer for jewels forms a pendant to a similar one for lace or India shawls. A carpet of uncut pile, of a pale blue, a silver lamp, and a Psyche glass ; the ornaments, silvered, to correspond with the decorations of the chamber, complete the furniture. The hangings of the dressing-room are of blue silk, covered with lace, and trimmed with rich frills of the same material, as are also the dressing stands and chaise lounge ; and the carpet and lamp are similar to those of the bed. A toilette-table stands before the window, and small jardinières are placed in front of each panel of looking-glass, but so low as not to impede a full view of the person dressing in this beautiful little sanctuary. The *salle de bain* is draped with white muslin, trimmed with lace ; and the sofa and *bergere* are covered with the same. The bath is of marble, inserted in the floor, with which its surface is level. On the ceiling over it is a painting of Flora, scattering flowers with one hand, while from the other is suspended an alabaster lamp, in the form of a lotus."

But for Lord Blessington the end of all this fair display was at hand, and scarcely was that dainty chamber completed, when he who had planned its costly ornaments lay still and silent on the backs of the silver swans, never again to experience flattery, and at last of no more account, save in the affections of a few friends, than the poorest toiler on those wide estates in Ireland from which had been wrung the wealth which he, careless of the duties of his high position, had lavished in southern climes on the caprices of his jaded appetites. Lord Blessington aroused himself from the luxurious indolence of his Paris life, and appeared in his place in the House to support the Emancipation Act. It is edifying to read Lady Blessington's remarks, in "The Idler in France," on the self-denial and patriotism displayed by her lord in this great public service. "His going to England," her Ladyship remarked, "at this moment, when he is far from well, is no little sacrifice of personal comfort; *but never did he consider self when a duty was to be performed.*" On the 22nd of August, 1822, Lord Blessington had left his country, and now, after an absence of more than six years from his tenantry and the legislative house, of which he was a member, he returned to perform a scanty act of honesty. In the May of 1829 he was again in Paris, when on the 23rd instant he was carried off unexpectedly by apoplexy. With all his extravagance and waywardness, which were grotesque enough to prove the insanity of any man of humbler rank, he was a nobleman of many amiable qualities as well as grave errors, and he managed to secure the love of many good, and the admiration of many clever men. "Adieu, most pleasant companion!" Savage Landor wrote, on hearing of his lordship's death. "Adieu, most warm-hearted friend! Often and long, and never with slight emotion, shall I think of the many hours we have spent together; the light seldom ending gravely—the graver always lightly."

On Lord Blessington's death, his property was found to be encumbered not less than those who knew his habits anticipated it would be; and in addition to the debts heaped on the estates, their rental, from depreciation, and sales of certain portions, had been diminished by nearly a quarter of their value when his lordship came into possession of them. When he first came to the Irish peerage, the rental was about £30,000; in 1846 it was £22,718 14s. 7d. The disposition of the large property, on the earl's death (large, notwithstanding its incumbrances), was such as those interested expected it would be; and on the whole it displayed an honourable and affectionate consideration for all who depended on him. To defend the conduct of a father who married his daughter, while still a child, and utterly ignorant of the world, to a man much her senior, whom she had never had a sufficiently long acquaintance with to enable her, under ordinary circumstances, either to love or hate him, is of course impossible; but as this mad arrangement, the darling whim of his lordship's affection, had been completed, it was only right to place a liberal supply of wealth at the command of the good-natured Count D'Orsay, who to oblige his friend, more than to serve his own base interests, took for his wife a school-girl, "then an infant of the age of fifteen years or thereabouts."

Lady Blessington on becoming a widow had a clear income of £2,000 per annum (inclusive of the £1,000 per annum settled on her at the time of her marriage), and certain other property, such as the lease of the mansion in St. James's Square, carriages, paraphernalia, and plate. Handsome as such a provision was, it was very insufficient for the maintenance of the Hotel Ney, and her ladyship, for various reasons, in some respects wisely, determined to return to London, where it was in her power, with prudence, to occupy a leading position in society on her curtailed means. In 1831, she fixed herself in Seamore Place, where she resided till 1836, when

she moved to the more imposing residence of Gore House, Kensington, formerly the home of the gentle William Wilberforce, and since Lady Blessington's death, the hall of Soyer's symposium. In 1832, the Count and Countess D'Orsay were living in Seamore Place, with Lady Blessington; but ere long the deeply-injured Countess D'Orsay disappeared from the scene, and her husband by his acts avowed himself the devoted slave of the mother. The relation between him and the latter lady was never questioned by society, although with his dying breath the Count protested to Mr. Madden that his regard for her had never been other than that of filial affection, and that she had been to him a mother, and only a mother! Yet though no doubt existed in society as to the connection of Lady Blessington with her husband's son-in-law, yet so fascinated was the squeamish British public by the style and dignity and graces of the culprits, that London morality for once assumed the garb of charity, and insulted virtue only whispered her indignation. Some utterly disbelieved the mean calumnies. Bolder spirits admitted the truth of the accusation, but in the circumstances, in the imprudence of Lord Blessington in making so distinguished a man as Count D'Orsay the daily companion for years of his young and transcendently beautiful wife, and in his wicked folly in fast tying the *Cupidon déchainé* to a child-wife, found weighty excuses for the grave offence. It is true that the more severe, and let us add in honesty the more virtuous, of the women of England's aristocracy held themselves proudly aloof from the attractions of Lady Blessington's drawing-rooms; but this censorious prudery, as its enemies termed it, did not influence the men who flocked round that mistress of all womanly graces, who, if as the years of her worldly frivolity increased in number she lost the early warmth of her heart, retained to the last a generous sympathy with noble thoughts, and a sincere admiration of genius. The celebrated men

who met in her rooms were not a few ; and if one could re-assemble the constituents of some of those Gore House parties, we should find many distinguished wits and political chieftains who, when Lady Blessington first gathered them to her and paid homage to their great powers, were little known to fame and were neglected by fortune. There were to be seen the boon spirits of the retiring generation: Hook reeling and staggering into the grave, Henry Luttrell ever ready to retort, George Colman the younger, James Smith with his gouty feet in slippers, resting on crutches, watchful and listening in the glittering crowd which ever and again brightened with a *mot* extorted from him by an acute twinge of his malady, and the scholarly Lord Strangford. The most famous and powerful of our statesmen and lawyers too would mingle in the scene ; the grand old Duke, courteous to all and calmly observant, and strikingly cordial to Count D'Orsay, the only artist who painted him like a gentleman ; Lord Abinger ; Lord Durham ; Lord Lyndhurst, whose grand old age permits him still to be the most forcible if not the most accomplished orator of the House of Peers ; Lord Brougham, whose vigorous intellect is at this day unaffected by the sufferings of his decayed frame ; and the Marquis of Lansdowne. And amongst the poets of renown, and politicians who had grown grey in success, were viewed the youthful, or at least comparatively unknown, aspirants for the high honours in letters and state-craft and the fine arts—Dickens (already celebrated) ; Thackeray, slightly embittered perhaps by his long tenure of obscurity ; Bulwer, smarting under the insults of newspaper critics, who represented him as compounded of pedant, fop, and scoundrel ; the younger D'Israeli fresh from the failure of his maiden speech in the House of Commons ; Nicholas Parker Willis, overdressed, insinuating, and not to be daunted, taking notes of the dresses, attitudes, and words of the celebrities present,—notes soon to be dished up with scandalous allusions and impertinences,

for sale in America; Haydon, whose life of religious impulse, unguided by morality, was soon to close in suicide; Lawrence and Landseer; Albert Smith, handsome, genial, and natural, notwithstanding his affectations, giving offence on all sides, but pleased himself and anxious to please others, highly esteemed by his hostess for his inexhaustible stories of pleasantry, and admired for his manly virtues as much as for his many accomplishments. And in the later years of the Gore House festivities, a constant and deeply obliged guest was a small man of middle age, thin, meagre, and wiry, with a swarthy and sallow face, of which the large aquiline nose, the heavy and corrugated brows, and the sinister expression of the eyes, were the prominent characteristics. Silent, self-absorbed, a conspirator by instinct, without a sentiment save love of self, cold and perfidious, this was the man whose life had been one continued mutiny against law and order; who in 1831 narrowly escaped death in his attempt to establish a republic on the ruins of the Papal power; who a few years subsequent to that abortive attempt essayed the overthrow of Louis Philippe, which offence was pardoned on the ground of his imputed mental imbecility; who repaid this clemency by as ill-advised and contemptible a descent on Boulogne, for which act of unprincipled folly he was for five years imprisoned in the fortress of Ham, *not sent to perish on an African swamp*; and who, escaping from that prison in the disguise of a stonemason, reached England, was nurtured, cherished, and supported by the Count D'Orsay and Lady Blessington, was by the instrumentality of the former mainly advanced to the presidency of the French Republic, and since attaining that high position has proved himself truly a Prince by his gratitude to the friends of his adversity, and his respect for oaths—and an Emperor by the services he has rendered to liberty.

Such were a few of the principal characters who moved at various periods, stretching over almost twenty years,

through Lady Blessington's rooms of reception. Some were aged men, who were conducted from those bright saloons by the great "grim chamberlain;" whilst some had high careers before them, and found in those assemblies only the pastime of youth.

During Lady Blessington's residence in Seamore Place, Count D'Orsay had a small house in Curzon Street, and when she removed to Kensington Gore, he took a modest dwelling near at hand, but soon he resided altogether at Gore House. It was manifest from the first that the lady's extravagance would bring her to ruin. Her income for her rank was by no means large, and it was burdened by a long string of poor relations. She and her sister, Lady Canterbury, together allowed the drunken old reprobate, their father, £120 per annum; and he was only one of her many pensioners. The establishment at Gore House with economy (and Lady Blessington, strange to say, throughout her domestic arrangements was prudent and methodical in her extravagance) demanded an expenditure of at least £4,000 per annum; and her ladyship had but half that sum. Count D'Orsay of course shared his purse with hers, but his property consisted altogether of his debts, bearing a magnificent interest of about 10 or 20 per cent. His embarrassments were without intermission, and it is impossible to say what they in all were. During his residence in England he had an allowance from the Court of Chancery in Ireland, on account of the settlement on Countess D'Orsay, of £550 per annum, and he received in all £103,500 from the Blessington estates, but these sums only paid a fraction of his liabilities. Latterly he applied his powers as an artist to the replenishment of his purse, and the reason he did not become rich in his profession, was because the sums he earned were spent before he obtained them. It was also generally believed that on the whole he won at play more than he lost; but it requires no ordinary powers of credulity

to believe in a gambler eventually winning. To make up the deficit in income Lady Blessington used the pen, which she at first employed only as a toy; and as far as money is concerned, she worked with good result.

She had in 1822 published "The Magic Lanthorn; or, Sketches of Scenes in the Metropolis" and "Sketches and Fragments," from the latter of which works she obtained between £20 and £30, which sum she applied to a charitable purpose. At that time she little thought that she should live to haggle with publishers for a price, and hope anxiously for the arrival of a bookseller's cheque in time to meet a bill shortly to become due. In 1832, the *business* of bookmaking began, and she published in "Colburn's New Monthly Magazine," and afterwards in one vol., 8vo., her "Journal of Conversations with Lord Byron." Her novels followed in due course;—"Grace Cassidy, or the Repealers," "Meredyth," "The Follies of Fashion, or the *Beau Monde* of London," "The Two Friends," "The Victims of Society," "The Confessions of an Elderly Lady," "The Governess," "The Lottery of Life, and other tales," "Strathern, or Life at Home and Abroad," "The Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre," "Lionel Deerhurst, or Fashionable Life under the Regency," "Marmaduke Herbert," and "Country Quarters," published after her death. Besides these works she published, in 1839, "Desultory Thoughts and Reflections," and "The Idler in Italy," and in 1841, "The Idler in France," numerous sketches in fashionable periodicals, and her poem, "The Belle of the Season;" she moreover edited for some years Heath's "Book of Beauty," "The Keepsake," and "Gems of Beauty," and for six months had the post of fashionable correspondent to the "Daily News," for which she was paid £250.

Of her industry, it is impossible to speak in too high terms, while of most of the productions of her pen it would be difficult to speak in too low. She might have gone down to posterity with a fair and distinguished literary

reputation if she had never published her works. Surrounded with the most illustrious writers, who combined to extol her wit, and with good reason praised her extraordinary conversational powers, had she confined her authorship to manuscripts, which, like Count D'Orsay's journal during his first visit to England, were submitted only to a few chosen spirits, we, and ages long after us, should have looked back to her with respect, and have revered her for a genius she did not possess. A few of her *jeux d'esprit* would have been preserved and handed down, growing brighter from the process of tradition, and they would have enabled us to imagine their speaker to be the lovely, graceful, cordial creature she really was, and also to be much more besides. But with such evidences of flippancy of thought, superficiality of observation, feebleness of expression, and commonness—we do not like to say *coarseness*—of taste, as abound in her novels, it is impossible for us to romance about her. And yet, as regards the remuneration for her labours, she was a successful writer, and in good years made more than £2,000 per annum. A careless observer, some hundred or more years hence, of the manners and literature of this generation, will most likely be led into error by the perusal of Lady Blessington's fictions, coupled with a knowledge of what she was able to sell them for. They really possess no merit whatever; to originality they do not pretend, being weak imitations of the Hook school, the best of them being just readable repetitions of the semi-satirical and entirely abusive descriptions of vulgar people, whom the great Theodore regarded as belonging without exception to the ranks beyond the pale of the aristocracy; they are loosely and ungrammatically worded, and are throughout pervaded by bad taste and disreputable morals. The gross sensuality of the men, the vanity and petty deceitfulness of the women, cannot be estimated by any one who

has not read "The Governess," the "Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre," and the "Confessions of an Elderly Gentleman." Lady Blessington never took her pen in hand to write a story that she did not immediately proceed to describe, in terms calculated to raise a blush on a modest girl's cheek, intrigues that would shock the morality of a green-room, and the delicacy of a kitchen. "The Idler in Italy," "The Idler in France," and "The Conversations with Lord Byron," perhaps, do not merit this severity of censure; but even over them the trail of the serpent is visible, and many of her other works deserve yet more unsparing condemnation. It is passing strange that numbers who could contemplate without pain or displeasure the pictures of fashionable vice and degradation, which Lady Blessington delighted to draw, were ready to raise the cry against Thackeray who was less sweeping in his accusations against those in high places, though he always urged the truth of his charges with greater ability. And yet this lady was rewarded for her flimsy nastiness with £2,000 a year! It is true she was; but the publishers, and not the public directly, paid her thus exorbitantly. The proprietors of fashionable "Annuals," "Keepsakes," and "Books of Beauty," knew the value of a Countess's *name* on the title pages of their volumes of elegant common-place. It was the title, not the *style*, of Lady Blessington that was purchased in Marlborough Street, just as Mr. Colburn and Mr. Bentley had their offices painted for appearance's sake. And ere her ladyship was disabled from using her pen the booksellers found out the mistake they had made; her novels were almost invariably a source of loss to the publishers, who, partly because they deemed it good for their "house" to send forth a Countess's works, and partly out of gratitude for being invited to the dinners and receptions in Seamore Place and Gore House, paid her handsome prices for them. For "Strathern, or Life at Home

and Abroad," which first appeared in the "Sunday Times," and then was re-published by Colburn, in four volumes, she obtained nearly £600. What proportion of this sum the newspaper proprietor paid and what the publisher, we cannot say, but Mr. Colburn only sold 400 copies, and lost £40 by his bargain. It is something to say for the taste and intelligence of the readers of fashionable novels that they declined to patronize Lady Blessington, and that in the later years of her career she found it difficult to get a publisher to publish a novel from her pen at his own risk.

But ere long the crash came. All the exertions of which the Countess was capable could not raise her income of £2,000 to £4,000, per annum; and Count D'Orsay found his labours in his studio unable to meet his expenditure as the acknowledged leader of London fashion. To the last he persisted in extravagance, and declared that as long as he lived it should be a point of religion with him to have the best of everything he *did* have; when he could not have the best carriage, he would have the best umbrella. For years before the final exposure occurred, Lady Blessington led a life of unintermittent anxiety about money matters; on all sides demands were made upon her, and while she was smiling responses to the many flatterers who stood around, visions of angry and defrauded tradesmen distressed her. In the spring of 1849, Gore House was deserted by its mistress, and the sale followed quickly on her departure; but for two years previous she and Count D'Orsay had been fairly beleaguered by creditors, and no one was admitted within the residence, till a careful scrutiny had satisfied the porter that the visitor was not a sheriff's emissary. At length bailiffs effected an entrance, and an execution was put in the house by a dealer in silk, lace, India shawls, and fancy jewellery, for a debt of £4,000. Count D'Orsay, who for a considerable period had been kept a prisoner to the

house and grounds, save on Sundays, when he appeared in his usual splendour in the parks, and after the dusk of other days, was immediately informed of the irruption, and that he must fly without delay, for his person would not be safe for a day after the rumour of the execution had spread through the town. The blow, so long dreaded, had at length fallen, and strange to say the Count would not believe it had really descended. "Bah—bah—bah," he responded with magnificent incredulity to his valet's assurances; but an interview with Lady Blessington convinced him that the intelligence was all too true. The next morning the Count D'Orsay, who for nineteen years had dictated laws, in all matters of taste, to the proudest, most accomplished, and most powerful noblesse in the world, fled from the seat of his empire, with one portmanteau, and attended by a single servant. He went to Paris, whither Lady Blessington and the two Miss Powers (her nieces) followed him at the end of a fortnight, leaving all the treasures of Gore House to be inspected by the motley assemblage, London only can supply, and to be dispersed in all directions by the auctioneer's hammer. There was no time for ceremonious adieux; Lady Blessington fled without bidding farewell to even her intimate friends, with the exception of two or three trusted and loved familiars. Of course the world she quitted did not waste sorrow on her trouble,—for it was the world of Vanity Fair; but she left amidst the many who viewed her fall with that exultation which the spectacle of defeat often produces in depraved minds, and the many more who regarded her overthrow with cold amusement and un pitying curiosity, a few who, grateful for many acts of her womanly generosity, remembered the fine qualities of her nature, which though tarnished and sullied by the worldly atmosphere in which her life had passed, was still noble in its ruin, and who now, in the day of her adversity, loved her more than ever they had done in the sun-shine of

her glory. Numerous were the offers, made with a delicacy which invariably clothes such offers, of pecuniary aid, but they were gratefully declined; and the eyes of the satirist, standing amidst the crowd of Jew dealers, tradesmen, and idle gazers, who with ribald talk surveyed the treasures of the deserted mansion on the days previous to the auction, glistened with emotion when he thought of her who in those sumptuous rooms had given happiness to so many, for whose trials and sufferings the world has so little sympathy—men of unappreciated merit, struggling genius, and exiled patriotism.

Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay, worldly as they had been for years, had so little knowledge of human nature as to anticipate a cordial welcome in Paris by Prince Louis Napoleon, President of the Republic. D'Orsay, in contradiction to all popular conceptions of a man of fashion, always took a bright view of mankind, and from first to last gave all persons credit for the virtues which only a few possess. From his bosom friend, then, whom he had cherished in the hour of need, and had assisted, indeed one may say *raised*, to a proud eminence, he did not expect ingratitude,—but he found it. Louis Napoleon, indeed, requested the honour of a call from Lady Blessington, at the Elysée, to which place she went with her nieces and Count D'Orsay; and the Prince afterwards invited the party to dinner; but his manner clearly indicated that the Prince President and future Emperor did not intend to be grateful for favors received. “Ah, ah, Lady Blessington,” said the President, when the open carriage in which he was seated, shortly after the manifestation of his base ingratitude, was *locked* in a street-stoppage with that of Lady Blessington, “are you going to stop long in Paris?” With an arch look of merriment she replied, with felicitous satire, “I don't know—*are you?*” There were many around who witnessed this passage of arms and the Prince's defeat, and ere sunset the polished sarcasm had been repeated in

every salon in Paris. In the new life before her, preparing for a fresh career of triumph, and with a prospect, now that the worst had fallen, of a distinguished position in Paris, Lady Blessington's spirits rose, and she was observed to assume the airy cheerfulness and light-hearted merriment which for years she had laid aside. Her jointure of £2,000 per annum was secure; she was hopeful that her pen would still do her good service; and though no longer young she was still lovely and admired. She busied herself with fitting up, in the old style of luxury and wanton magnificence, a handsome apartment in the Rue du Cerq, close to the Champs Elysées; and the thoughts of seclusion from worldly pleasure and of pious preparation for death, which in the bitter moments of her disappointment she had cherished, were dismissed, and again she pined for the terrible excitement which had destroyed the fineness of her moral sense. But suddenly death came; and she had scarcely entered her new home, when an affection of the heart, which had been progressing for at least twenty-five years, though neither she nor her physicians had detected it, carried her off without warning into the dim world, on the 4th of June, 1849.

The consternation of Count D'Orsay at this bereavement is indescribable. He never recovered from the blow. From the day of her death he was a doomed man; his hitherto extraordinary health failed, his frame became the seat of a complication of disorders; disease of the spine declared itself, and eventually, after bearing with manly fortitude acute and prolonged sufferings, he expired on the 4th of August, 1852, in his 52nd year. During the three years and two months intervening between the death of the woman he had loved so passionately and his own, he displayed in no ordinary way that nobility which makes even those who do not reverence God, pay homage to our common nature. To the last he was devoted to art. Poor, and stricken with painful disease, he bravely exerted the

great mental faculties with which he was endowed, and in the studio in which he worked and slept and died, he received the distinguished visitors—princes, nobles, poets, painters, sculptors, historians, and orators—who paid him the attentions of reverential affection. His excruciating bodily torments never extracted from him a groan; resigned and patient he exhibited a gentle consideration for those around him, which was womanly in its tenderness and pathos: sometimes he would be overcome by a paroxysm of grief, but the violent emotions were always caused by thinking of *her*. When it was known he could not recover, Louis Napoleon, with a hand red with the massacre of the *coup d'état* sent him the appointment to the nominal post of *Director of Fine Arts*, and when it was known that the Count no longer lived the paltry juggler lamented that he had lost his “best friend!”

The great work of D'Orsay's genius, in his last days, was a mausoleum, at Chambourcy, “a pyramid of granite, standing on a square platform, on a level with the surrounding ground, but divided from it by a deep fosse, whose sloping sides are covered with green turf and ivy, transplanted from the garden of the house where Lady Blessington was born. It stands on a hill side, just above the village cemetery, and overlooks a view of exquisite beauty and immense extent, taking in the Seine winding through the fertile valley, and the forest of St. Germain; plains, villages, and far distant hills; and at the back and side it is sheltered by chesnut trees of large size and great age; a more picturesque spot it is difficult to imagine.”

“Solid, simple, and severe,” says Mrs. Romer, “it combines every requisite in harmony with its solemn destination; no meretricious ornament, no false sentiment, mar the purity of its design. The genius which devised it has succeeded in cheating the tomb of its horrors, without depriving it of its imposing gravity. The simple portal is

surmounted by a plain massive cross of stone, and a door secured by an open-work of bronze, leads to a sepulchral chamber, the key of which has been confided to me. All within breathes the holy calm of eternal repose: no gloom, no mouldering damp, nothing to recall the horrible images of decay. An atmosphere of peace pervades the place, and I could almost fancy that a voice from the tomb whispered in the words of Dante's Beatrice:—

“ ‘Io sono in pace?’ ”

“The light of the sun, streaming through a glazed aperture above the door, falls like a ray of heavenly hope upon the symbol of man's redemption—a beautiful copy, in bronze, of Michael Angelo's crucified Saviour—which is affixed to the wall facing the entrance. A simple stone sarcophagus is placed on either side of the chamber, each one surmounted by two white marble tablets, encrusted in the sloping walls.”

In the one sarcophagus lies Marguerite, Countess of Blessington; in the other, Alfred, Count D'Orsay.

With hearts glowing with tender regret, commiseration, and charity, as best becomes weak and erring men, let us leave undivided in death those two who, whatever were their sins, were so steadfast in their love, and who were never careless of the happiness of those to whom they extended their widely embracing friendship—those two, whom our judgment may condemn, but our affections must defend.

CHAPTER X.

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON.

MISS LANDON'S fame was won by her poetry ; it was in her metrical compositions that her genius displayed itself : her prose-writings are lively, dramatic, forcible, but they contain nothing distinctive,—differing as they do but little from the productions of many other artists far less richly endowed, and marked by no signs of that passion and depth of pathetic feeling which inspired her melodious verses. Still her novels are interesting, and bristle with the indications of rare intellect ; and they will long continue to be read, both for their own merits, and because every fact connected with the sad history of their author will for many a day be attractive.

Miss Landon was of respectable extraction. Her great-grandfather, the rector of Nursted and Ilsted, in Kent, was in his day active in polemical literature. On his mural tablet in Tedstone Delamere Church, Herefordshire, is the following nervous inscription, “The Revd. John Landon, rector of Nursted and Ilsted, in Kent, died June 3rd, 1777, aged 77. His religious principles and literary abilities were evident from what he did and wrote in vindication of the religion he professed, *to the utter confutation of all Dissenters.*” The son of this worthy man, who utterly confuted all dissenters, was like his father, a beneficed clergyman, for he was rector of Tedstone Delamere for more than thirty years, till the year 1782—when he died, leaving a family of eight children, very badly provided for. The eldest of his three sons was John, L. E. L.'s father ; another was Whittington, who did something towards restoring the fortunes of the family—for he

was Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, for more than thirty years, and held the lucrative deanery of Exeter.

At an early age John Landon went into the navy, but after two voyages he relinquished the service, and through the aid of his comparatively opulent brother Whittington, was, after the lapse of some years, admitted to a partnership in the house of Adair, the army agent, in Pall-Mall. He married and for a time thrived, but owing to commercial and other losses, he died in very needy circumstances, leaving behind him a daughter, L. E. L., and a son, the Revd. Henry Whittington Landon. Besides these two children he had another daughter, who died in her thirteenth year.

Letitia Landon was born at 25, Hans Place, Chelsea, on the 14th of August, 1802; and in Hans Place and its immediate vicinity she passed the greater part of her days. In her sixth year she was sent to a school kept by Miss Rowden, at No. 22, Hans Place, an establishment that had as pupils Miss Mitford and Lady Caroline Lamb, but she remained there only a few months. Her education she received from a cousin, Miss Landon, whom to the last she loved with all the strength and depth of her affectionate nature.

Her childhood on the whole was a happy—indeed a *very happy*—one. She was reared on a system that precluded harshness, and from her infancy she found exquisite delight in dream and reverie. For hours together the child would ramble in the garden of her father's house with a favourite long wand in her hand—called her measuring stick. "What is that for?" an intruder would inquire. "Oh," would be the reply, "don't speak to me, I have such a delightful thought in my head." In the nursery she was remarkable for strength and quickness of memory, being able with ease to learn by heart long ballads, and for unselfishness and generosity of disposition. Her brother had almost innumerable stories to tell of the unvarying ardour of her affec-

tion for him, and her instinctive habits of self-sacrifice. She was a buoyant, laughing, romping, gleeful child, notwithstanding her frequent fits of pensiveness,—a source of light and pleasure to the whole house. And this happy temperament she retained for years after the deep melancholy of her muse had made the wide world weep.

She was quite a child when first her hot thoughts ran into verse, and in respect of age was the fit inmate of the school-room when her first effusions in the "Literary Gazette" (there inserted by her father's old friend, Mr. Jerdan, the editor) made all readers capable of appreciating poetry, aware that "L. E. L." was no common rhymester. Week by week the verses poured forth, eloquent of deep feelings, possessing a melody that Moore never in his sweetest lyrics surpassed, and rolling on with a lawless strength that showed plainly they flowed because they could not be withheld. They were covered with faults, want of polish, carelessness, redundancy of metaphor and ornament; but these very artistic failings were overlooked, nay admired—for they were the proofs and insignia of youthful and impetuous genius. Within the unknown poet's breast swelled a power that was not to be trifled with, an irrepressible force that must have its way like electricity;—how should she pause to count numbers, refer to the rules of Syntax for enlightenment on a dubious expression, or debate on the artistic proprieties, when thoughts, feelings, fancies, images followed in quick succession, struggling for utterance and defying reflection. Here was the secret of "L. E. L.'s" power; poetry was the natural expression of her ardent feelings; she, like the nightingale which "crowds and hurries and precipitates with thick fast warbling his delicious notes," poured forth her soul into song, because it was the only way nature permitted her to disburthen herself of her ungovernable emotions. Song with her was not a mere mental exercise,

an art,—it was a passion, an instinct. It is absurd to say she might have done greater things if she had taken more care, more “pains,” as if the production of poetry were much the same thing as the manufacture of a gauze-bonnet. The conditions of her genius denied her the faculty of composing with cold critical deliberation; just in proportion as she “took pains” her power deserted her and her virtue departed from her; with her, faultlessness would have necessitated the absence of all the elements of her poetic excellence, and would have been the greatest of all faults. Mr. Blanchard, who by the light of his own splendid intellect knew better, perhaps, than any critic of his day, how to analyse, and detect, and value the mental treasures of others, well says in his biography of L. E. L., “But let this, at the same time, be borne in mind, that L. E. L. is not, even in her earlier poems, chargeable with having used two words where one would do; she only sinned in employing two ideas, or three, where one was enough. It is true, she often marred a fine thought by a careless and inexact expression; but more frequently she destroyed the effect of a fine thought by profusely heaping others upon it, until she buried her nightingale in roses.”

Her career in literature began when she was young, but it was not prosecuted with any of the fitfulness of youth. From the time which saw her first guinea earned till her death her exertions were unbroken; for the proceeds of her industry and talents were necessary for the maintenance of various members of her family. Scarcely had she won renown when her father died; and from that time she by her pen supported herself and mother, contributed lavishly to her brother, and always managed to aid with her purse her less fortunate friends.

In 1820, when she was only eighteen years old, appeared her first long poem, “The Fate of Adelaide, a Swiss Romantic Tale;” in 1824 came forth “The Improvisatrice,

and other Poems;" and in 1825 appeared "The Troubadour;" "The Golden Violet, and other Poems" appeared in 1826; "The Venetian Bracelet," and "The Lost Plaid," were published in 1829; her first novel, "Romance and Reality," appeared in 1830; "Francesca Carrara," another novel, in 3 vols., followed in 1834; "The Vow of the Peacock, and other Poems," appeared in 1835; a volume of her sketches, entitled "Traits and Trials of Early Life," was published in 1836; "Ethell Churchill," a novel in 3 vols., and "Duty and Inclination," another novel in 3 vols., appeared respectively in the years 1837 and 1838. To this list must be added a novel, published after her death, "Lady Anne Granard," but of this only the commencement was by her pen. But perhaps the greater part of "L. E. L.'s" work was done for the columns of the critical journals; she was incessantly engaged in that most trying department of literary exertion—trying, at least, where the duties of it are faithfully performed—the perusing and passing judgment on the productions of others. And Mr. Blanchard assures us that, as a critic, "L. E. L." was as conscientious in sparing no pains or trouble, as she was ever delighted to find it in her power to praise the performances of friend or foe, or of the unknown.

Turning from the consideration of her literary labours to the story of her private life, we may nerve ourselves for receiving as sad and heart-rending a narrative as biography can afford. Professional jealousies are a proverb; but to the shame of authors be it said, there is no vocation to be compared with theirs for the malignant animosities and petty feuds of its members. He who writes a book may expect no mercy from the brothers of his gentle craft, if it succeed; added to the other disagreeables of such a step—to the supercilious astonishment and contempt of his important stupid relations, who think book-making a low propensity, and the rancour of his young cousins and meeker

associates, who feel themselves surpassed—he must make up his mind to experience unkindness from his best friends. A *man* may bear this; with masculine pluck he can gird himself up for the fight and enjoy it, paying back blow for blow, or in a delightful sense of moral superiority smiling benignantly at the hand that strikes; but a woman always suffers acutely, and in nine cases out of ten is permanently injured in such a fight; the atmosphere of hate she has to breathe robs her of womanly gentleness, the cruel taunts poured upon her goad her into passionate revenge; and the memory of violent acts done and violent words spoken under the influence of such a sentiment, robs her of self-respect.

As soon as “L. E. L.” emerged from obscurity the curs were at her heels; it was attempted to ridicule her genius, but even the world, so fond of the laughter that pains, would not countenance such endeavours. Then it was determined to pull her character to pieces, and in so doing society promised itself and found a rare feast of enjoyment. She was a young girl, totally incapable to battle with business men, to bargain with publishers and “hold her own.” When she got money, she did not know what to do with it; she could not keep it in a box and be free from fear that it would be stolen; it naturally struck her that it ought to be committed to the hands of a banker, or invested in the funds. But how was she, a young and inexperienced maid, to know what banker to go to, how to approach him, or how to find out the way of access to those same mysterious “funds?” Her father was dead, so she thankfully accepted the advice and assistance of an old friend of his, in all business arrangements. This man was old enough to be her father, or even grandfather, was married, had children, and an unblemished reputation; but yet the delicacy and pure morality of the world were shocked at such intimate relations existing between an unmarried woman and a friend of the opposite

sex. Again "L. E. L." was solicited to write on nearly all the best journals and magazines of London, at the same time that each of those periodicals was daily returning to their authors, as "rejected communications," reams upon reams of inane doggrel, and wretched prose. "How comes this?" exclaimed the rebuffed aspirants, male and female, indignant with disappointment, "but oh, we can understand how *she* makes her writings acceptable to the proprietors of —, to the editor of —, to Mr. — upon —; we know how a woman without delicacy, or dignity, or principles can *influence* such men." Such a flood of vile scandal as followed upon these and similar insinuations was never before sent by evil destiny against any poor devoted woman. The fact that the numerous stories afloat were contradictory, and utterly annihilated each other, made nothing in her favour; every accusation was credited, a charitable preference only being shown for that which was most revolting and improbable. The nasty wretches who propagated these filthy rumours were not content with doing their utmost to blast the reputation of their victim, but they pursued her into the retirement of her humble home, sending her anonymous letters full of the coarsest insults. And for a while so successful was this persecution, that even the minds of charitable and well-intentioned people were seduced by it to form unjust judgments. To such a point of extravagance did this passion for detraction go, that the traducers would not even allow "L. E. L." to possess ordinary personal comeliness. She was most gracefully formed, and had a face lighted by an expression of singular loveliness that perfectly atoned for whatever the features lacked in symmetry; yet she was represented as being not less hideous in body than she was morally deformed. When the Ettrick Shepherd first saw her in Mrs. Hall's house, he opened his eyes wide with surprise, and then overcome by the aspect of her countenance, so eloquent of womanly purity, tenderness, and

simplicity, he took her hand and, looking with emotion into her face said, "Oh dear! I ha' written and thought many a bitter thing about ye, but I'll do sae na mair; *I did na think ye'd been sae bonnie.*"

No one who had any personal intercourse with her credited the charges for a moment. Her friends were all constant ones, and she lived amongst the good and renowned of her own sex, and was domesticated with ladies—unmarried and advanced in years—of precise and even frigidly correct manners. But in what relates to living celebrities, falsehood is more vigorous than truth; calumny is rarely hushed till its object is in the grave; the exalted may never hope *to live it down*—they are lucky if they *die* it down. Neither silence nor refutation will materially affect a scandal; crush a lie with the most complete and convincing contradiction, and to-morrow it will be more vigorous than ever. The charge every one remembers; the counter-statement no one listens to. Numerous suitors made matrimonial overtures to "L. E. L.," but the cautions of friends who had "information" from "the best sources," made them either draw back, or exhibit a prudential curiosity that caused her indignantly to repulse them. One high-minded man implored her to marry him. But "rumour" had already coupled her name dishonourably with his, and with noble generosity, though she loved him, she refused to become his wife with such a blot on her fame. She wrote to him, "Again I repeat, that I will not allow you to consider yourself bound to me by any possible tie. To any friend to whom you may have stated our engagement, I cannot object to your stating the truth. Do every justice to your own kind and generous conduct. I am placed in a most cruel and difficult position. Give me the satisfaction of, as far as rests with myself, having nothing to reproach myself with. The more I think, the more I feel I ought not—I cannot—allow you—to unite yourself with one

accused of—I cannot write it. The mere suspicion is dreadful as death.” So the match was broken off; and of course the world discovered why,—it was clear that the gentleman had made inquiries into the truth of *certain statements*, and fully convinced of their truth, and of Miss Landon’s infamy, had withdrawn.

Just at this juncture, about October, 1836, she met in society Mr. George Maclean, the eldest son of the Rev. James Maclean, of Urquhart, Elgin, and nephew of Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Maclean. This gentleman was President of the Council of Government for the Gold Coast Settlements, and was generally styled Governor of Cape Coast Castle. To this appointment in the most hateful and pestilential spot of the entire globe was attached a miserable and inadequate salary of £500 per annum. He was a man of considerable intelligence and mathematical knowledge; but was, if nothing worse, a cold, hard, stern, and sensual creature. He had at Sierra Leone a native mistress who had presented him with a family of children; he was addicted to coarse debaucheries; and, if he had not a vile temper—unquestionably he had brutal manners. He had no taste for polite literature; poetry he called “verse making,” and novels were to him “the merest trash;” but he had, what is frequently found in low natures, a fondness for music,—he played away at the violin at all spare moments. In other respects he was by no means a man of good repute; fame accused him of having acted with hateful cruelty in Africa on more than one occasion, and in 1837 he was formally accused to the home authorities of bloody excesses of his power, and flagrant breaches of law;—of inflicting inhuman corporal punishments, in one instance causing the death of an unhappy wretch by 500 lashes which he himself saw administered, and of giving direct encouragement and protection to Spanish and Portuguese slave traders. These were the charges, and he by no means cleared himself of them; but the irregularities and excesses of his conduct were overlooked,

or regarded with little severity, by that official mercy which superintends the behaviour of colonial potentates.

Such was the amiable man who presented himself at this crisis to "L. E. L." and made her an offer of marriage. She frankly told him that her character was sullied in the opinion of the world, and he replied that the impertinent remarks of scandal-mongers were of no importance to him. Smarting under the indignities she had long experienced, anxious for change of scene, and desirous of the protection which only a husband could offer, she accepted the proposal, and was formally announced to her acquaintance as engaged to be married. No sooner had this taken place than the ardour of her lover's attachment began to cool, and she was informed on good authority of the particulars of his domestic arrangements at Cape Coast Castle. On being questioned he frankly confessed that he had a mistress there, but he was longing to break off his connection with her. What course was L. E. L. to pursue? She felt that he had displayed generosity to her, had loved her and sought her as a wife in spite of the slanders of lying tongues. Surely it was her place in return to refrain from censuring him for sinful practices which he had not indulged in since he had formed her acquaintance, and which he assured her should never again be renewed. Again, how was she to retire from the engagement she had entered into? If she declined to marry this African voluptuary, and to take the place of his savage paramour, it would immediately be trumpeted forth to the world that Mr. Maclean also, "on coming to know all," had found that his honour imperatively commanded him not to unite himself to her. He was cold and frigid to her; but that might only be manner. While affairs were in this position Mr. Maclean went to Scotland, and remained there for months without writing her a line; he even returned to the Gold Coast without marrying her. Explanations, however, took place, and the result of the stormy querulous courtship

was that Mr. Maclean came once more to London, and the wedding ceremony was performed on the 7th of June, 1838, at St. Mary's, Bryanstone Square, Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer giving away the bride.

The "happy couple," with heavy hearts, without loss of time proceeded to Africa. The lady was wretchedly ill on the voyage, sea-sickness almost killing her. At length however, the dreadful passage was effected, and she entered the castle on the 16th of August, just after its discarded mistress had quitted it. So little forethought or delicacy was shown by Mr. Maclean in this matter, that he positively had to go on shore before his wife to expel this unwedded companion of his bed from his residence. They at last trod on that dismal coast, and poor "L. E. L." entered the huge, stern castle that was to be her grave. Her husband, who during the voyage had treated her with sullen indifference, now became terribly ill, so ill on his own showing that he could not sufficiently command his temper, so as to behave to her with common courtesy. Kindness from him of course she had learned not to expect. Night and day she nursed him till he had well nigh recovered his health, when in his hours of convalescence he twitted her with wasting her time on "verse-making," and taunted her for not being a better house-keeper. Once again through her unremitted attention he was strong and well, but he showed no tenderness to her. He left her entirely alone all the day long. "The solitude," she wrote, "except an occasional dinner, is absolute. From seven in the morning till seven in the evening, when we dine, I never see Mr. Maclean, and rarely any one else." She had only one English domestic, and she was to leave her in a brief time. "There are eleven or twelve chambers here empty, I am told, and yet Mr. Maclean refuses to let me have one of them for my use, nor will he permit me to enter the bed-room from the hour I leave it, seven in the

morning, till he quits it at one in the afternoon. He expects me to cook, wash, and iron; in short, to do the work of a servant. I never see him until seven in the evening, when he comes to dinner; and when that is over he plays the violin till ten o'clock, when I go to bed. He says he will never cease correcting me until he has broken my spirit; and complains of my temper, which you know was never, even under heavy trials, bad." She tried to be cheerful, to do her duty—in the trust that God would send her brighter days. She tried to persuade herself and her friends that she passionately loved the brutal tyrant who owned her—that she had never loved any other man. She wrote to England making light of all her troubles and representing all things around and before her in the warm glowing colours of romance.

But this horrible struggle was mercifully destined not to be of long continuance. On the morning of the 15th of October, the day fixed for the departure of her only English maid, after her marriage, she was found between the hours of eight and nine lying on the floor of her bed-room breathing her last, with a bottle *labelled* "Acid Hydrocyanicum" in her hand. She expired almost immediately after she was discovered. No post-mortem examination of the body was made. A careless inquest was held over the corpse, but the evidence taken was loose and inconclusive, by no means justifying the verdict of the jury that the death of "the said Letitia was caused by her having incautiously taken an over-dose of prussic acid, which from evidence it appeared she had been in the habit of using as a remedy for spasmodic affections to which she was subject." The most remarkable part of the evidence is where the conscience-accused husband said, that "*an unkind word had never passed between Mrs. Maclean and deponent (i. e. himself)*".

Speedily the remains of L. E. L. were interred in the centre of the court before Cape Coast Castle. A small

white marble tablet, inserted in the castle, tells of her death at the early age of thirty-six; and daily over her silent grave, on that fearful shore, the soldiers of the fort pass to parade.

Immediately the news reached England, inquiry and the most revolting rumours began. It was satisfactorily shown that L. E. L. had not been in the habit of taking prussic acid, and there was the strongest evidence to show that she did not take out a bottle of hydrocyanic acid with her. Again, none of that powerful poison had ever been procured from England or elsewhere for the medical establishment of the fort. How then did the deceased become possessed of any? Next the question arose, *did she after all die of that poison?* There was no *post-mortem* examination; no one appeared to have remarked the powerful scent of almonds, that is an inseparable feature of the acid, and Mrs. Bailey (L. E. L.'s maid), on reaching England, declared that there was no such scent; and lastly, it was stated in evidence, that the dying woman had the bottle *in her hand*, whereas the instant relaxation of the whole system, that invariably follows on taking the poison, would have rendered the retention of the bottle impossible. Supposing her not to have perished by prussic acid administered by her own hand, by what means did she meet with death? In answer it was shown that she was subject to alarming fits that resembled death, and that she had had them frequently just before quitting England, when writhing under the tortures of slander and unkindness. Might she not have expired in such an attack? But if so, how was the *labelled* bottle to be accounted for? Then came a ghastly whisper, so unspeakably horrible that the lips refused to utter it aloud. Had not Mr. Maclean's discarded mistress, urged to the crime by fierce jealousy, found some means of poisoning her, and caused that bottle to be put in her hand so as to create the impression that she had poisoned herself? Had not her

own husband been an accomplice in this foul crime, suggesting the best way of misleading suspicion, and taking care at the hurried inquest that no "unpleasant" questions were asked, and no unpleasant verdict arrived at? It was impossible to say. But certain it was that amongst the hurricanes of conflicting statements, fabulous exaggerations, and gross falsehoods that darkened every step of this enquiry, it was heard over and over again that half-an-hour before her death L. E. L. had *taken a cup of coffee from a black boy*. Who was that boy?

A cry was raised for a fresh inquest;—an enquiry made not by the trembling creatures of Mr. Maclean, but carried on by officers sent out for the purpose. Mr. Whittington Landon (L. E. L.'s brother) was simple enough to apply to the circumlocution office about the matter, beseeching that an investigation might be made, and supplying papers of all the information he could obtain on the matter, but of course nothing was done at the office, and, equally a matter of course, his papers were lost.

To solve this mystery now would be impossible. She perished nearly twenty years ago on a foreign and barbarous shore, where she was certainly not surrounded by friends, for all the native population had conceived the warmest animosity against the European lady who had driven their countrywoman from the castle. Mr. Maclean himself died at Cape Coast on the 28th of May, 1847, holding the office of Judicial Assessor to that colony till the day of his death; Mr. Swansey, the magistrate before whom the inquest was held is dead; Dr. Cobbold, the medical man who saw her die, is no more; and Mr. Brodie Cruikshank, one of the jurors, and author of "Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa" has gone to his long home.

The appalling close of L. E. L.'s days of sadness surpasses the wildest and most terrible conceptions of fiction. Many

German and French writers, and American ones also, of whom Edgar Allan Poe may be regarded as the representative, have exerted their ingenuity in the construction of stories capable of exciting the most vivid and profound sensations of horror, and to attain their object they have often wisely made their tales terminate in mysteries of manifold terrors, so that the reader is left to choose his own explanation of the drama out of various suggested tragedies all alike painful. But nowhere has romance produced so dark and awful a position as this. It may be that suffering acutely from nervous derangement, she took an overdose of the poison through her lips, or unacquainted with the strange potency of the fluid, applied it in the palm of her hand to the exterior of her aching jaw,—and then fell down, loving life and dreading death; perhaps she ran to her door to cry for help. It is very probable that, overwrought with anguish, at the prospect of being left to the tender mercies of her stern husband, without one European woman to protect her, her heart strings burst—and life fled! Perhaps nature was too strong, her heart would *not* break—and she wrested death from the hand that would not give it, and perished a suicide! It may perchance be that her destruction was achieved by poison administered to her by the agents of a savage woman, whom fiendish jealousy urged on to the committal of murder, while the husband stood by—watching the devil's work, and admiring its exquisite cunning. We know not which of these suggestions to accept—in which the truth lies; and in the alarm of perplexity we surround the *one* death with *all* the horrors of *all* the different awful modes in which it might have been accomplished.

Farewell “L. E. L.,” gentle woman, high-souled poetess, deeply wronged, passionately admired! and as Landor sung, let us repeat a lament for thee!

A Dirge for the departed ! bend we low
Around her bed of unwakening rest ;
Still be the hoarse voice of discordant woe,
Still as the heart within her marble breast,
Which stirs not at the cry of those she loved the best.

A dirge—Oh weave it of low murmurings,
And count the pauses by warm dropping tears.
Sweeter, yet sadder than the woodlark sings,
Amid the shower of April's fitful wings,
Be the faint melody ; the name it bears,
Shall thrill our England's heart, for many linkéd years.

CHAPTER XI.

SIR EDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON BULWER-LYTTON,
BARONET.

SUCH is the prolix and perplexing name and title of one of the foremost of our living writers. The confusion caused by this string of appellatives has been a long standing joke with the public, and even at this day it is not rare to find an admirer of "The Caxtons," and an enthusiastic defender of "The Rise and Fall of Athens," who is as ignorant of his favourite author's name as was the last of that series of footmen whom Thackeray has clothed with celebrity. Have you read "Bulwer's last?" is a familiar enquiry to the ears of every one, and just now the usual answer is, "Ah, that queer stuff that is now coming out in Blackwood. Well—really—I can't yet see what he'll make of it; but everything that *Bulwer* writes must be good."

One of the great drawbacks of the present age of "action" to the young man is, that he is compelled by it to impudence and assumption, is forced to throw aside that habit of reverence, which is *really* congenial to generous youth, and to jostle, scan, measure, and judge his superiors, as though he were at last their equal. The young author may not rest content with admiring the great masters of his art, with feebly imitating them, and gratefully acknowledging the benefit of their instructions; other conduct is required of him—the pen is put in his hand and he is commanded to criticise. Nor is he allowed to use the pen to tell the deeper and more honourable feelings of his

heart; emotions of love, wonder, even of genial sympathy he must restrain, and in their place must foster a spirit of arrogant and flippant self-sufficiency; by turns he must censure with a gibe and praise with a sneer, affect now a cold contempt and now an insulting pity. It is for him to point out not the author's beauties but his defects, not his patient research and general truthfulness, but his superficial errors and occasional failings. But it must be done! The bookseller cries for copy, and hunger cries for dinner.

By birth Bulwer Lytton was above the class from which the ranks of the literary profession are filled, for though not of a dazzling lineage he was on both sides of gentle origin. His father was General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, (the son of a certain William Wigget who became possessed of considerable estates in Norfolk, on the death of a maternal uncle, William Bulwer, whose name he took) and his mother was an accomplished and richly endowed lady, with a remote collateral descent, through her grandmother and great-great-grandmother, from a daughter of the Lyttons of Knebworth, Hertfordshire, into the possession of which estate she came by unusual good fortune. General Bulwer had two children besides Edward, namely, William-Earle-Lytton, his eldest son and his heir, and Henry Lytton, his second son, the Privy Councillor and Diplomatist, who besides having represented the Court of St. James's at Madrid, and subsequently at Washington, has contributed to literature "An Autumn in Greece," "France, Social and Literary," "The Monarchy of the Middle Classes," and "A Life of Lord Byron."

General Bulwer died in 1807, leaving his young family to the care of their highly-endowed mother. Edward, the youngest, was born in 1805, and consequently was only about two years old at his father's death. There can be no doubt as to the singular precocity of the child's intellect

for he was an author almost before he had mastered the art of constructing pot-hooks and hangers. When only five or six years old he wrote poems in imitation of Bishop Percy's ballads, and in 1820, when he was but just fifteen years old, he, or his vain friends for him, published his first volume of poems, entitled "Ismael, an Oriental Tale, with other Poems." Of course the verses of such a child are ridiculous enough in themselves, but they are remarkably good for so infantile a writer, and are an interesting proof of the care bestowed on his nursery education, and the industry which marked his earliest as well as all his after years. Perhaps the most amusing, and certainly not the least creditable poem in the collection, is one on "Waterloo," in which the deeds of the principal heroes are sung in strains which Pope and Homer between them inspired. The following sketch of the stalwart Shawe is a fair sample of the whole.

"Two British Heroes, of a meaner name,
That day shone proudly in the Field of Fame ;
Immortal Thonne, and bold Herculean Shawe,
Before whose arms, with fear and wond'ring awe,
Proud Gallia shrunk ; while gasping on the strand,
Nine chieftains fell by Thonne's destructive hand.

* * * * *

Mean time brave Shawe usurps the martial plain,
And spreads the field with Gallic heaps of slain ;
Where beams his sabre, wild confusion brings
Terror and death upon her iron wings ;
A cuirassed band of Gallic heroes saw
His martial prowess with admiring awe.
And first Bernot withdrew his wond'ring eyes,
And thus the chief with indignation cries :—
" O friends ! O Soldiers, shall the Gallic name
Rest, for a moment, in disgraceful shame ?
And shall yon Briton, glorying from afar,
Destroy our troops, and thin the ranks of war ?
Frenchmen, charge forwards ! and your king's applause,
Awaits your efforts in his glorious cause ;

For he that sends yon haughty Briton's head,
A worthy off'ring to the noble dead,
Napoleon's self shall grace his radiant name,
And age to age perpetuate his fame."
He ceas'd ;—and warmed by hope, his legion broke
Through fires of sulphur, and through mists of smoke."

Et-cetera, et-cetera.

As it was destined that these juvenile efforts were to see the light, the boy did well in publishing them without delay, when his age bore witness to the veracity of his assertion that they were composed between the age of thirteen and fifteen years. Some young gentlemen keep their nursery effusions in a box till they come of age, and then offer them to the public with their poem which did not get the prize at College, and their love sonnets of the last long vacation. The natural consequence of which step is, that ere long they pray the hills to hide them.

Bulwer Lytton was educated at private schools, or by private tutors, till he went to Cambridge, where as a fellow commoner of Trinity Hall, he became a personage of mark amongst the under-graduates of that noble university. As a young man of respectable family, and the probable heir of his mother's estate of Knebworth, and moreover as one holding in his veins a slight infiltration of the blood of the chivalric Lyttons, he naturally enough indulged in those dreary dissipations which the ingenuous youth of England hold to constitute "pleasure ;" but he was something more than an idle man, he read with regularity, and, like Macaulay and Tennyson, he ornamented his under-graduate career by successfully competing for the chancellor's prize medal for an English poem. The subject of the poem was "Sculpture," and Bulwer's verses, to which the medal was awarded in the summer of 1825, are rather above than below the average of such academical productions.

The passion for authorship was strong in the young man.

He left Cambridge with the fixed ambition to achieve distinction in literature, and by patient study, and a plodding industry, rather than by his unquestionable genius, he has attained his object. At first he was disheartened by the difficulties of composition; and some idea may be formed of what these difficulties were, and of the stubborn resolution with which he defeated them, when it is said that he wrote and re-wrote some of his essays nine times over, and after all never published them, because he was unable to relieve them of their awkwardness of structure, and inelegancies of diction. He published, while still very young, another volume of puerile verses, called "Weeds and Wild Flowers," and in the following year (1827), he gave the world anonymously his first novel, "Falkland." The structure of this story is slight and in many places clumsy, and the incidents as well as the characters of the hero and heroine are of an exploded school of melodrama. "Falkland," the hero, young, handsome, and richly endowed both in intellect and fortune, loves a beautiful Emily Mandeville, the young wife of a prosy, violent, and middle-aged member of parliament; he induces her to elope, but ere their Hegira their plans are discovered; the enraged husband seizes Emily rudely by the arm, shakes her, accuses her of her guilt, and hurls her from him; she falls on the ground and opportunely for the dramatic exigences bursts a blood-vessel; with a mad revulsion of feeling the husband lifts her from the ground, when lo! she is a corpse in his arms. Falkland hastens to Spain, gets his death-blow fighting for liberty, and dies exactly at the same moment of the four and twenty hours at which Emily expired;—*it was the half-hour after midnight!!!* The tale, both as a whole and in its details is painful and revolting, its composition is replete with puerilities, and its sentiment is never vigorous save when it is extremely vicious. The hero is extravagantly Byronic, is utterly blasé (as the heroes of young writers usually are), despises the university in which

he has been educated, condemns the mean pigmy capacities of its most distinguished members, scorns love, scoffs at learning, sneers sardonically at honesty, hates men much and women more, hardly manages to love himself. But here and there a glimpse of generous sentiment is obtained through the affectations of the youthful writer, showing that though not capable of thinking for himself he is anxious to do so, and that he has already acquired a knack of imitating the thoughts of others.

Bulwer's next book was of a very different kind from "Falkland," and after undergoing a brief period of neglect, was generally allowed to be a work of no common merit. Strange to say it was as far superior to the one which succeeded, as it was to the one which preceded, it. "Pelham; or the Adventures of a Gentleman," was written with great care, and the author exerted himself to make each sentence of the opening chapters attractive and memorable by a touch of humour or satiric wit,—a wise plan for a young and unknown writer who wants to seize attention, though perhaps not to be defended by the best rules of art. "Pelham" was the expansion of a tale called "Mortimer; or the Memoirs of a Gentleman," which Bulwer had written with great care and infinite labour, but which had been declined by a London publisher to whom it was offered. In reconstructing and enlarging this rejected tale the author was very deliberate; with studious industry he composed the first volume, and then, before going on with the second and third volumes, rested for several months. At last "Pelham" was completed, and was submitted to a publisher's reader. The blockhead condemned the tale unsparingly, and had it not been for the self-reliance and better judgment of the author it would have ever remained in manuscript.

In delineation of human nature, however, there is in it little originality, and even less power. The characters are all the victims of "humours;" fierce passions are indeed

described—but neither with force nor delicacy. ‘Lord St. Vincent’ is always making quotations from the classics to an extent not tolerated in well-bred society; ‘Wormwood’ is continually uttering brutal sarcasms; Lady Frances Pelham amuses us by one uniform display of worldliness, never varying in expression; and Sir Reginald Glanville has one uniform set of mental convulsions. At first the story has no plot, the characters being merely skittles set up for the author to play with; at the most a story is only dimly shadowed forth. But towards the conclusion attempts, differing in success, are made to throw the former scenes into dramatic contrast, and by after discoveries to arouse the reader’s interest in chapters which at the time of perusal were flat enough. This plan is very attractive to young authors, but experience teaches that no prudent artist will pursue it. Few people can, when reading, carry thought a step beyond the words of their author; if therefore the plot of a story at its commencement be only suggested, the multitude of readers will not have wit to perceive it, and ere they have arrived at the part which is to make a living world of the dumb-show, the dumb-show will be forgotten. In plot and in character-painting “Pelham” is not powerful. If there is any original conception in the book it is the hero, but his character is not sustained. As long as he is the audacious, impudent, inordinately self-conceited, and invariably successful man of intrigue, he is a pleasant companion enough; but the respectable Mr. Pelham of the ending is a very objectionable personage—his virtuous professions (manifestly intended by the author to be a help to the cause of the social moralities) being only the hypocritical groanings and sanctimonious palaver of a worldly man without heart and without sentiment. The merit of the book, as we have before said, is to be found in its brilliant style, lively humour, playful mischief, and its brief epigrammatic sentences, with a point in every line.

Bulwer was now fairly launched in life; he had already become conspicuous as an author, and he had also taken, perhaps with the inconsiderate passion of youth, that most important of all steps—matrimony. In 1826, the year subsequent to that in which he gained the poetry prize, he took his degree of B.A.; in 1827 appeared "Falkland," and in that same year he formed that ill-starred alliance with Rosina, the only surviving daughter of Francis Wheeler, Esq., of Lizzard Court, county Limerick, which has been fruitful of sorrow and disgrace. To enquire into the origin of this domestic war, and to chronicle all the scandalous stories that have for years been floating about concerning the sins of either party, of course is not our intention; nor would even this allusion have been made to the private sufferings of a celebrated man, had they not long ago been forced into notoriety. Unhappy marriages are not rare; in literary society they are frequent indeed; and observation teaches the folly of those who become the vehement supporters of either party in wedded strife. The best method of judging the combatants is the old and charitable one, of dividing the blame into two equal parts and giving the one moiety to the husband and the other to the wife. But so powerful is the passion of the multitude for bestowing sympathy on the victims of marital cruelty, especially in cases where the husband is a man of genius, that in all probability Bulwer would have been singled out for public chastisement had not the violence of his lady's conduct cheated her out of revenge and shielded him from social persecution.

The offspring of this marriage is one son, Edward Robert, born on the eighth of November, 1832, who was attached to the legation at Washington in 1849, and was transferred to Florence 1852, and who in 1855 published a volume of remarkable and powerful poems, entitled "Clytemnestra, the Earl's Return, the Artist, and other Poems. By Owen

Meredith." Besides this son, Bulwer Lytton had by his ill-fated marriage a daughter, named Emily Elizabeth, who is dead.

The novel which followed "Pelham" from Bulwer's pen was very inferior to the "Adventures of a Gentleman;" indeed it was a weaker and less promising performance than "Falkland." "The Disowned" was published in 1828, and it will long be pointed to as an example how very bad the youthful writings of a great author may be. The scene is audaciously laid in the last century, but no attempt is made to reproduce the life of that time, and not a chapter is there which does not show the writer to have been utterly ignorant of his subject. Goldsmith and Horace Walpole are indeed spoken of as being alive; but the topics of conversation, the forms of address, the courtesies, the social ambitions that are ridiculed, the furniture, dishes, dresses, the vulgar people, and the fashionable exquisites are all of the later years of the Regency. And as for the story and characters, in judging them, no language can be too contemptuous. The weak niminy-piminy descriptions, the frantic three-volume romanticisms of love, duels, and gipsy encampments, the wretched puns and spasmodic playfulness, are as painful as they are ridiculous. It is cheering to the young literary aspirant to know that the author of the "Caxtons" did in his twenty-fourth year publish such trash, and it is not discouraging to reflect that not all "the public" discerned what miserable stuff it was.

But after this unquestionable blunder Bulwer made no more signal failures. He felt that he had published so much that he was bound in honour to publish more; he had proclaimed that he felt himself endowed with the power either to amuse or instruct others, and, he resolved to show that he had made no empty boast. A consciousness of the many failings of his early performances only spurred his pride and urged him to exertion.

With unvarying industry he studied and wrote. He had learnt that the possession of genius does not enable a man to be a successful artist without persevering toil, and perhaps he began to suspect that his talents were not of that commanding order that he could afford to dispense with any of the aids of instruction and exercise. The result of his courageous application is no mean reward; he has fairly won the proud distinction of being an eminent writer and an accomplished scholar, and his pen has produced a long list of works—novels, poems, philosophical essays, political treatises, critical papers, and history—which prove the extent of his research, the calmness and strength of his reflective powers, and the versatility and gracefulness and fascinating freshness of his intellect. Year by year his strength has increased, and his mind has displayed some fresh vein of wealth; and so nicely does he seem to have combined the labours of the student with the pleasures of the man of the world, the toil of the closet with participation in the action of life, that the force and vigor of his mind have increased just in proportion as its stores of learning have been augmented. The grime of the book-worm has never tarnished his manly intelligence; he is a good representative of the polite Englishman of the nineteenth century, of frank and commanding address, cordial, urbane, easy and convincing in conversation, a brilliant orator, ready for action, a good horseman, a man of elegant exterior, well-appointed, well-dressed; and yet he systematically works at his desk, and—a Porson of “bon ton”—is one of the most profoundly read men, and best scholars of his day.

An imperfect enumeration of his principal works will show how prolific a writer he has been. After the “Disowned” (1828) came “Devereux,” a novel; “Paul Clifford,” a novel; “Eugene Aram,” a novel, and also a drama on the same subject. “The Siamese Twins,” a serio-comic poem; “Conversations of an Ambitious Student;” “England and the

English ;" "The Pilgrim of the Rhine ;" "The Last Days of Pompeii," a novel ; "The Crisis," a political brochure ; "Rienzi, or the Last of the Tribunes ;" "The Duchess of la Valière," a drama ; "The Lady of Lyons," a drama ; "Richelieu," a drama ; "Money," a drama ; "Ernest Maltravers," a novel ; "Alice, or the Mysteries," a novel ; "The History of the Rise and Fall of Athens ;" "Leila, or the Siege of Granada," a novel ; and "Calderon the Courtier," a novel ; "Night and Morning," a novel ; "Day and Night," a novel ; "The Last of the Barons," a novel ; "Zanoni," a novel ; "Eva, the ill-omened Marriage, and other Tales and Poems ;" "Harold, or the Last of the Saxon Kings," a novel ; "Lucretia," a novel ; "The New Timon," a poem ; "King Arthur," a poem ; "The Caxtons," a novel ; and "My Novel, or Varieties of English Life."

To this catalogue of literary achievements may be added numerous brochures, and uncollected papers, as well as his esteemed services as editor for a time of the "New Monthly Magazine."

Nor has Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton confined the exercise of his abilities to authorship. As he began writing for the public when he was still a boy, so he entered the great arena of statesmen, and proved himself a man worthy to take part in the conduct of national affairs, ere he had passed that period of life which is usually devoted by the children of fortune to the pursuits of pleasure rather than the contests of ambition. He entered the House of Commons at a critical period, in 1831, as member for St. Ives, and was an actor in those stormy scenes which immediately preceded the passing of the Reform Bill ; in 1832, he was returned to Parliament by Lincoln, and he represented that borough for ten years, when at the general election of 1842, his candidature for re-election was unsuccessful. After this rejection he had no seat in the house till 1852, when he became member for Hertfordshire, which county he still

represents in the popular, and at the same time patrician assembly. In 1835, he took his M. A. degree at Cambridge; and in 1844, on the death of his passionately beloved mother, he assumed the name of Lytton after Bulwer, and as the representative of Lytton of Knebworth, and Robinson of Guersy, succeeded to the ample estate he now enjoys. Before this change of name, he had altered his title, for his baronetcy was conferred upon him in 1838. In 1851, he was appointed a deputy-lieutenant of Hertfordshire; in 1853, he obtained an honorary D.C.L. degree at Oxford; in 1856, he was elected rector of the University of Glasgow; and in the present year he has been offered a place in the Earl of Derby's cabinet.

There is no need to pass judgment on and examine in detail Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's parliamentary career in these pages; for the acts of the politician have had little influence on the course of the artist, and though he has not declined from time to time to promulgate his opinions on public affairs by his pen, he has never like Disraeli made literature the slave of his political ambition and animosities. He stands indeed amongst those who have surrendered the liberal principles which are usually so alluring to youth for those more conservative views which are almost invariably cherished by men, who in advanced years have arrived at such a position, as regards opulence and station, that change can scarcely benefit them. But with Bulwer Lytton there has been no sudden shifting of ground, no unexpected rejection of opinions just as they first became opposed to interest, no springing from one policy to another for the sake of the leadership of a party or a place in a ministry. It is true that he once was conspicuous as a radical, and that he now is a conservative and a supporter of Lord Derby, but the mutation was effected slowly and gradually, as all honest changes of opinion in thinking men are: he grew to be other than he

was, by little and little, as time and altered circumstances calmed his impulsiveness and affected his judgment even as we all change ; but neither greed, nor hate, nor any mean lust accelerated in him the operation that proceeds with greater or less rapidity in all the children of men. The course that Coleridge ran is the ordinary course—the *common-place course*—of susceptible and impressible minds ; the case of one who like Landor retains in old age the ardent passions, and vivid feelings, and generous sentiments of youth is the exception. Moreover Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer in his public life has given his influence to the support of measures, which will send his name down to our descendants as the true friend of the profession of his choice, in urging upon the legislature the duty of protecting dramatic copyright, and relieving the newspaper press from the oppression and exactions of the stamp-laws. And whatever cause he has advocated in politics, whether he has made his appeals by the pen or by his studied but powerful and refined eloquence, his efforts have been marked with courage and frankness and singleness of purpose, and have invariably been received with applause, though they may not always have been successful in their result.

It is not difficult to assign to Bulwer Lytton his proper place amongst novelists. He is entitled to foremost rank amongst writers of *talent*, as distinguished from writers of *genius* ; he is a careful and well-trained artist, deficient in creative faculty. All that good common English intelligence (without the high mental qualities which divide the real representative men from the men they represent,) applied to *belles lettres* can achieve, he has accomplished—but more he has not. We take all his works—from the crude performances of his youth to the best productions of his mature age—and we find them to lack that subtle quality, that delicate aroma of excellence which is the difference between “the best” and the merely “very good.”

The coldness of the uninspired, the wary exactness of the painstaking, and the timid anxiety of an artist "by rule," offend us in every line of his earlier fictions. In them the smell of the oil, and the sound of the file meet us everywhere. Every separate picture, correct as it is, instead of firing the imagination, irritates the critical mind with visions of the labour of the studio, the prudent selection of good models, the time spent in grouping them, the mixing of the colours, and the long, long days and months of perseverance and toil. The women, difficult as it would be to pick out exactly their defects and points of weakness are little better than lay-figures. Where Thackeray and Dickens present us with a picture which forcibly arrests us, unmanning the strongest with its deep pathos, or elating the most gloomy with scarcely governable merriment, Bulwer Lytton amuses us with the cunning mechanism of a band of automatons. In his earlier works, though every rule of art is most studiously observed, though the scenes are produced with the most exquisite appliances, and the descriptions, prolix though they frequently are, are relieved by a judicious display of varied information, this defect is most strongly apparent and most grievous; in his historical fictions the fault is perhaps found in an equal degree, but it does not give the reader equal pain, for stiffness and frigidity of delineation do not shock our taste, (indeed they sometimes seem peculiarly appropriate) in pictures of time far past. Even with the assistance of a practised novelist, it requires so much mental labour for us to realize to our satisfaction the pomp and dignity of feudal state, and the luxurious politeness of patrician circles in Ancient Rome, that our minds are at hard work to keep the many features of the obscure distance in sight,—are well content to do without the continually flashing wit which would distract attention from the main object of the story, and to rest upon the ponderous movements and

deliberate conversations which are amongst the principal characteristics of historical romances. In "The Last Days of Pompeii," we are grateful for the carefully written descriptive chapters, and the repeated digressions from the story to discuss the condition of Pompeian society (though our patience would refuse to tolerate such lengthy essays in a novel on modern times) because, though they may impart to us no information, still they aid us in the task of calling to mind the ingredients and appendages of life in a remote period, or at least are agreeable to the steady movements and cautious operations of our minds, endeavouring to call from the silence and darkness of history scenes which were acted nearly two thousand years ago. In like manner it is well that in "The Last of the Barons" and "Harold," the various personages brought on the stage should be slow of utterance and of stately gait, because, while they are making their speeches and crossing from side to side, we want to find time wherein to furbish up our historical reminiscences. But the coldness and formality, and mechanical stiffness, which so greatly disfigure all Bulwer's earlier fictions descriptive of modern life, and which are pardonable and even pleasant (though not the less artistic faults) in his historical novels, almost entirely disappear in the latest productions of his pen. The ease, simplicity, warmth, and finish of every scene in "The Caxtons" and "My Novel," are as surprising as they are delightful to the critical reader. At the first appearance of these works there was a general exclamation that they were unlike their author's previous writings, because of their healthy tone of sentiment, but the more discerning saw that the real distinctions between these fictions and their precursors lay in their writer's growth in artistic strength and discernment, and not in his supposed moral illumination. These two novels are Bulwer Lytton's great achievements, and to one who with

competent mind examines the literary career of the illustrious baronet, they are marvellous instances of what magnificent results may be arrived at in art by continual and careful study. In the former of these works Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton conceived the happy idea of drawing a picture of life in the present century, which should be in every respect a companion picture to Sterne's of the last. Conscious of his power to realize the bold and bewitching imagination, he did not hesitate to put on his canvass the self-same characters that are preserved in *Tristram Shandy*. The scholarly recluse residing in the country, the old captain wounded and on half-pay, the simple gentle wife, the family-doctor, the son—the pride and hope of his father! Just as Sterne had these in the fore-ground of his work, so are they to be found in “*The Caxtons*.” But Bulwer Lytton went further. With a splendid courage that would have been impudent audacity in an artist of less power, he reproduced the very scenes, and imitated the eccentricities of “*Shandy*,” in a style that for once raised imitation from the abject position which is its appropriate place. For a brief time readers hesitated, ere proclaiming their opinion on the daring attempt; their respect and love for an old classic author, one of the fathers of the English novel, and a tenderness for the honour of *Uncle Toby* and his companions, made them at first disposed to condemn ‘the reproduction;’ but as month by month the story progressed, fewer objections were heard, and the sounds of approbation redoubled, till finally, on the close of the tale, one universal acclamation proclaimed the author's triumph. It was felt, and justly felt too, that all that was excellent and all that was pleasing in *Tristram Shandy*—the keen wit, humourous sarcasm, and subtle pathos—had been taken from the dirt and obscenity with which Sterne's impure mind had surrounded them, and had been transplanted without sustaining any injury to a soil where they

found a more vigorous growth and were no longer choked by noxious weeds. It was seen too that the merit of "The Caxtons" by no means consisted in what the author had taken from his predecessor, and that, in addition to the parts that were avowedly reproductions of "Shandy," it contained a healthy moral tone, a richness of fancy, a refinement of thought, and a wealth of learning such as are looked for in vain in the pages of Sterne. Yet "The Caxtons" has failed to meet with appreciation in at least one quarter; it was only a few months since that a sagacious critic in the columns of one of the leading monthly magazines, startled the educated world with an announcement that he had discovered "The Caxtons" to be nothing more or less than a gross plagiarism on "Tristram Shandy." The worthy essayist, bent on demolishing the reputation of the servile copyist, proceeded to bring forth passages proving the truth of his accusation, and succeeded doubtless in establishing his case to his own satisfaction. Amusing instance this how blockheads may thrust themselves into high places, and how worthless the opinion of a justly admired organ of criticism *may* be!

It is almost impossible for a writer to arrive at celebrity without being attacked in some form or other for the demoralizing tendency of his works. The English public, better pleased with displaying its own virtue than with virtue herself, is always ready to enjoy an author's genius, and in gratitude ever after speak of him as a depraved scoundrel, to drink a pleasure to the dregs and then call it penitentially a sin, to indulge a sentiment and, when it has ceased to interest, discover that it is a morbid appetite. And if there appear any danger of a rising man being allowed to proceed an exception to this kindly rule, his "friends" are sure to be on the alert to seize the first opportunity of reminding society of its censorious duties. Of living writers, perhaps no one in his day has been more

generously abused than Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton; the corrupting influence of his pen has formed the ground of innumerable attacks in periodicals against him, has inspired many a pulpit-orator, and was at one time the regular stock subject of conversation in the amiable circles of sectarians. But Bulwer Lytton has had two sources of consolation for the severity of the judgments passed upon him,—in the increasing popularity of his works, and in the comfortable consciousness that if he smarted under the lash he at least deserved it. There is no room for a doubt that some of his earlier works are as immoral as any literature which the present century has permitted to circulate amongst the polite families of English society.

“Paul Clifford” is perhaps the most pernicious offspring of its author’s pen; we do not wish to indulge in cant or the affectation of any superior moral sensibility, but we do not care to qualify our condemnation of this magnificent romance for thieves; it is a bad and dangerous book, alluring and charming to the ignorant and depraved, for it is as interesting and witty as it is vicious; through all its high sounding phrases no high purpose ever peeps forth; everywhere it abounds in sarcasm, that almost invariably is directed against honour, honesty, and religion. The author declared that he had a great and admirable object in view in its composition, being nothing less than “to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz. a vicious prison discipline and a sanguinary criminal code, the habit of corrupting a boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then, hanging the man, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders.” Granting that the author really had such an intention, no tale could answer his purpose worse. It starts with a radical error. “Paul Clifford” was not corrupted in prison, though he was sent there for the first time on a false charge, but he was vitiated in his earliest childhood by association

with robbers and pick-pockets. Again, the romantic story of the *Hero Clifford*, in which the history of the thief Clifford is lost rather than merely enveloped, perfectly extinguishes the moral which the author professes to inculcate. Paul, the legitimate son of a gentleman of family and a judge, is taken by force when quite a child from his father, is reared amongst burglars and highwaymen, becomes the ornament of the road, and is eventually condemned to death by his own father. This hackneyed position (worn threadbare in French novels), the scenes which bring it about, and the love passages of the hero with his cousin, a beautiful heiress, perfectly deprive Paul Clifford of all right to be regarded as a representative of *poor and vicious* thieves.

Moreover the satire of the book is so universal, and all classes, especially the respectable ones, are so skilfully and mercilessly attacked, that the reader is compelled to feel that Paul had a more honest, a fairer, in every respect a *better* lot as a rogue and highwayman than he would have had, had he been a decent shopkeeper, an industrious professional man, or, like his father, a distinguished politician. But it is impossible to class Bulwer Lytton amongst vicious writers; for all the sins of his earlier years against decency and virtue have been wiped out by "*The Caxtons*" and "*My Novel*," the simple pathos of which two books has moved to prayer and holy living, many a man who would have sneered at the grandest exhortations of the Bible, or fallen asleep over a sermon.

In the remarks we have made on Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's literary position and characteristics, we have confined ourselves to the consideration of his novels, and have abstained from any examination of his poems and dramas, his *History of Athens*, and his very entertaining essays. As a poet he fails in the same degree as he does in his prose writings; he is painstaking, full of acquired merit, careful

not to offend taste ;—but then these merely respectable qualifications, unaccompanied by true genius, meet with severer judgment in a poet than in one who modestly contents himself with clothing his thoughts in prose. Still our thanks are due to Bulwer Lytton for his efforts in this higher department of literary art ; his translation of Schiller would alone have made a reputation for an ordinary man, and his “King Arthur” has yet to meet with the praise that is its due. Indeed “The New Timon” is the only one of his metrical productions calculated to rouse contempt. In that work he certainly was guilty of grave errors, and displayed himself in a most undignified manner. The verses are very feeble imitations of Pope’s, and they embalm a mean spirit of envy and detraction. As the poem is now almost entirely forgotten, our readers will not disapprove our presenting to them the following sample of its satiric strength:—

“Not mine, not mine (O Muse forbid !) the boon
Of borrowed notes, the mock-bird’s modish tune,
The jingling medley of purloined conceits,
Out-babying Wordsworth, and out-glittering Keats,
Where all the airs of patch-work pastoral chime
To drown the ears in Tennysonian rhyme !
Am I enthralled by the sterile rule,
The formal pupil of a frigid school,
If to old laws my Spartan tastes adhere,
If the old vigorous music charms my ear,
Where sense with sound, and ease with weight combine,
In the pure silver of Pope’s ringing line ;
Or where the pulse of man beats loud and strong
In the frank flow of Dryden’s lusty song ?
Let School Miss Alfred vent her chaste delight
On “ darling little rooms so warm and bright,”
Chant “ I’m aweary ” in infectious strain
And catch her “ blue fly singing i’ the pane,”
Tho’ praised by critics, tho’ adored by Blues,
Tho’ Peel with pudding plump the puling muse,

Tho' Theban taste the Saxon purse controls,
And pensions Tennyson, while starves a Knowles,
Rather, be thou, my poor Pierian Maid,
Decent at least, in Hayley's weeds arrayed,
Than patch with frippery every tinsel line,
And flaunt, admired, the Rag Fair of the Nine."

In a most insolent note the author says, "the utmost that can be said of Mr. Tennyson is, that he is a favourite of a small circle; to the mass of the public little more than his name is known; he has moved no thousands; he has created no world of characters; he has laboured out no deathless truths, nor enlarged our knowledge of the human heart by the delineation of various and elevating passions; he has lent a stout shoulder to no sinking but manly cause dear to the nation and art; yet if the uncontradicted statement in the journals be true, this gentleman has been quartered on the public purse; he in the prime of life, belonging to a wealthy family, without, I believe, wife or children; at the very time that Mr. Knowles was lecturing for bread in foreign lands, verging towards old age, unfriended even by the public he has charmed! Such is the justice of our ministers; such the national gratitude to those whom we praise and starve."

Speedily came a reply from "Miss Alfred," which appeared first in "Punch;" and such a crushing answer we should say never before was known to proceed from any young lady, however much wronged. It is infinitely the finest personal satire to be found in the literature of this generation.

THE NEW TIMON, AND THE POETS.

We know him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke;
The old Timon, with his noble heart,
That strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old ; here comes the New.
Regard him : a familiar face ;
I thought we knew him : What, it's you,
The padded man, that wears the stays—

Who killed the girls, and thrilled the boys,
With dandy pathos when you wrote.
O Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the muses too,
You failed, Sir, therefore now you turn,
You fall on those who are to you,
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long enduring hopes,
And careless what the hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes,
And Brummels, when they try to sting.

An artist, sir, should rest in art,
And waive a little of his claim ;
To have the great poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please,
You never look but half content :
Nor like a gentleman at ease,
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spite, and what with fears,
You cannot let a body be ;
It's always ringing in your ears,
“ They call this man as great as me.”

What profits now to understand
The merits of a spotless shirt—
A dapper boot—a little hand—
If half the little soul is dirt ?

You talk of tinsel ! why we see
The old marks of rouge upon your cheeks.
You prate of Nature ! *you* are he
That spilt his life upon the cliques.

A Timon you ! Nay, nay, for shame ;
It looks too arrogant a jest—
The fierce old man—to take his name—
You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

The only blemish of this little gem is one of grammar, which of course the reader winced under a few seconds since.

But, as we remarked before, it is not difficult to assign to Bulwer Lytton his proper place amongst novelists. He is not equal to Thackeray and Dickens (two such writers of fiction no previous age produced), but he is high above most of the others of his art. It is true that in 1835 he was made a baronet, nominally in consideration of his literary merits, and the authors of "Vanity Fair," and "Pickwick," have not been rendered illustrious by any such mark of royal favour ; but the literary service which won for Bulwer Lytton this questionable dignity, was his political pamphlet entitled "The Crisis." His baronetcy was simply an acknowledgment of his political services to Sir Robert Peel, and since he had set his heart on it, it would have been conferred on him, if he had never penned a line, as a mere member of the house, and the owner of a considerable landed estate. The red hand is not in truth one of his literary honours ; it is merely the ensign of his enviable position in respect of wealth, just as the Prince Consort's Field Marshal's *baton* is not an emblem of his military capacity and prowess but of his exalted social rank.

CHAPTER XII.

RT. HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

THOUGH men may differ much as to the merits of Mr. Disraeli, no one will question that he is one of the most prominent men of our time. Those who grudge him the honourable title of "celebrated" will allow that he is "notorious." At least, to use Johnson's happy expression, he has made himself "public." There are few persons who are more talked about. He is a stock topic with idle men at clubs, and with ladies during morning calls. If the daily journals are dull and the town generally void of excitement, Mr. Disraeli is brought upon the carpet, and old stories about him are told with new variations. And very amiable, good-natured stories some of them are, and doubtless without exception, quite as truthful as the anecdotes about distinguished living individuals are on examination usually found to be. From the long-legged stool in the Attorney's office to his seat as leader of the House of Commons, all his many positions in his brave and triumphant struggle are touched upon. By the many he is represented as an unprincipled charlatan, by the few as a singularly disinterested, profound, and far-seeing statesman; and in these estimates the many and the few are both equally far from a correct judgment.

His career, like any one of his best novels, is a collection of startling paradoxes, fascinating inconsistencies, brilliant contradictions. The acts of his life are such that they may be so arranged as fully to justify the common charge that he is the embodiment of intellect without morality; and it

is equally easy to draw from them strong evidence of his sincerity and lofty sense of duty. A Jew, glorying in his descent, he devotes all his energies to the service of those whose ancestors have ever abhorred his race, and who themselves never omit an opportunity to do insult and injury to his people. A plebeian, educated to a plebeian vocation, he is the associate and darling of patricians. By turns indebted to each of the great sections of society, he has laboured enthusiastically to make them all alike the objects of distrust and contempt. For years he directed his cruel satire against those noble houses which he so felicitously nicknamed "the Venetian Aristocracy," and yet it was by the Venetian interest that he was mainly raised to his present elevation. He is the leader of the country party, the mouthpiece of the county aristocracy, and yet no writer, so successfully as he, has striven to lower the members of that party in popular esteem. The mushroom date of their rank, their questionable origin, the absurdity of their heraldic pretensions, the ignoble nature of the greatest achievements of their families, have been by him exposed to general ridicule. Sprung himself from a family who had from time immemorial been traders, he has in nothing been so consistent as in hostility to the trading classes of the community. He proclaimed (and still proclaims himself) the veritable benefactor and well-wisher of the *very poor*; at a period when the Chartists were the objects of almost universal condemnation he was their champion; and yet when all statesmen of character had at length agreed that the corn laws must be abrogated without delay, he stood forth the defender of the bread-tax which he knew was reducing the multitudes by famine, and would goad the survivors to rebellion. His hand has been against every one. If there is any exception to the universality of the warfare he has carried on, it is to be found in those very few houses of the aristocracy which have better claims to the *éclat* of ancient

descent than the amusing fabrications of the Herald's College, and which were founded by those old barons who at periods of pecuniary difficulty were in the habit of getting possession of a wealthy Jew, and robbing him first of his teeth and then of his money.

Of the many countrarieties in the career and character of Mr. Disraeli, we think the explanation is to be found in the antagonisms which the very different difficulties he has had to contend with, and the unjust social prejudices he has had to suffer under, have aroused within him. As this sketch proceeds, occasion will be taken to enforce this view.

The family of Disraeli was one of those many Hebrew households who were expelled from the Spanish Peninsula by the Inquisition at the end of the fifteenth century, and who fled for ignominious shelter to the Venetian republic. At and long before the time of this migration the Disraelis bore a Gothic surname, but on settling in Venice, they discarded their old appellation and assumed that of Disraeli. The reason of this singular and somewhat sinister proceeding, which at least we should imagine calculated to baffle a genealogist desirous of tracing the Disraeli pedigree to its source, is not apparent. The Conservative statesman himself has attributed to his ancestor two motives for thus changing his name, which though just reconcilable, savour slightly of inconsistency,—devout gratitude to the Lord of Hosts, and a lust for worldly distinction. Speaking of his grandfather, Mr. Disraeli says, "His ancestors had dropped their Gothic surname on their settlement in the terra-firma, and *grateful to the God of Jacob* who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never borne before, or since, by any other family, *in order that their race might be for ever recognised.*" Proud

of his nation Mr. Disraeli takes pleasure in reflecting that he belongs to a portion of it, which it appears was, and perhaps *is*, regarded by those who are members of it, as being more respectable than any other section, namely, Sephardim. But it would seem that the distinction is a wide one, embracing alike the powerful and the lowly of vast numbers of the Jewish outcasts. "Sephardim," says Mr. Disraeli, "that is to say, children of Israel, who had never quitted the shores of the mid-land ocean, until Torquemada had driven them from their pleasant residences and rich estates in Arragon, Andalusia, and Portugal, to seek greater blessings, even than a clear atmosphere and a glowing sun, amid the marshes of Holland, and fogs of Britain. Most of these families held themselves aloof from the Hebrews of Northern Europe." It excites something of amusement and more of sadness to learn that these rejected and despised ones despised each other. Still we are sorry that Sephardim means nothing more—for the word has a pleasant sound to a musical ear.

After dwelling and trading in Venice for several generations, the Disraelis sent one of their family to this country. The name of this individual was Benjamin; he became an English denizen in 1748, married a beautiful woman, and devoted himself to trade with such success, that he left his only son Isaac a comfortable, but by no means large fortune. His grandson says of him—"he made his fortune in the mid-way of life." He did not die till he had entered on his ninetieth year, but up to the extreme of his old age he *enjoyed* existence. The only important source of unhappiness his life contained was the embittered temper of his wife, whose anguish at the contumely heaped by society upon every member of the Hebrew nation so affected her mind, that she became the victim of a morbid hatred towards her unfortunate race.

With Isaac Disraeli, the old merchant's son, the public

are well acquainted. Disappointing the intentions of his father, who wished him to apply to commerce, he early entered upon the life of a student and author. He wrote several novels, which have long ere this been forgotten; and other works which have a good chance of being read by future centuries. He was a nervous, bashful recluse, all that fulfils the popular ideal of a book-worm; for the times in which he lived he cared nothing; contemporary politics he candidly confessed he could not understand in any degree; and this incapability of appreciating the language of parties resulted from his never having varied his study of books with the study of mankind. He was utterly ignorant of the world, and as regarded the affairs of his own times frankly acknowledged himself so. Yet he did not scruple to write a dogmatic and paradoxical work on a period of our history, of which the politics are peculiarly perplexing to any student—let him be ever so shrewd and well versed in the complications of party interests. Of Isaac Disraeli's "Life and Reign of Charles the First," a sufficient description is given to readers of all denominations, by stating that it procured for him the grateful recognition of the university of Oxford, which conferred the honorary degree of D.C.L. on him—"optimi regis optimo vindici." But the important contributions from this author to literature are his "Curiosities of Literature," and his other works of inquiry into subjects in the domain of "literary antiquarian research," which were compiled with such accuracy and attention to truth, that they have universally been received as books of authority. The life of Isaac Disraeli was a happy, a useful, and an eminently respectable one. Devoted to letters, he avoided the pursuits of worldly ambition, and the dangerous excitement of fashionable life; but whenever he emerged from the seats of his studious seclusion, to gaze for a few weeks at the gay world which was to him nothing more than a bright pageant on a stage,

he was welcomed with cordiality to the best circles of metropolitan society. His existence was, like his father's, a long one; during the last years of it he was afflicted with blindness, but his cheerfulness and activity of intellect endured till the last. For a considerable portion of his life he resided in an imposing mansion in Buckinghamshire, Bradenham House, and there he died in the 82nd year of his age, on the 19th of July, 1848. Isaac had four children, three sons and a daughter; Benjamin, the eldest son, is the celebrated subject of this memoir; the second son is a clerk in the Registry Office in Chancery; the youngest son is a Buckinghamshire farmer. Miss Disraeli died unmarried, while travelling with her brother Benjamin in the East.

The English are prone to boast that their country is favourable beyond all others to the poor aspirant after wealth and social distinction, who has courage, and intellect, and perseverance. They point to Eldon, and Stowel, and the plebeians amongst the spiritual peers, and proceed to compliment themselves on having a country adorned with liberal institutions. But it may be questioned if there is any people equal to the British in distrust and contempt for "penniless adventurers." How venomously, millionaires and paupers alike, do they hiss the opprobrious title from between their lips! Penniless Adventurers! It is difficult to fix exactly on the cause for this general dislike for men *with* brains and *without* wealth. Such individuals are not avoided from a wise caution, lest they should rob us opulent ones of the money they naturally thirst after; for the self-complacency of Cræsus in being able to hold his own is always greater than his dread of schemers. In all probability, much of this hostile feeling to men who have to master the world by their brains, arises from wounded self-esteem. The very fact that a man hopes to win his way by his wits is an avowal that he holds

himself to be a better and stronger one than those sturdy capitalists whose positions are hereditary;—what wonder then that the sturdy capitalists resent the boast with a, “Be reasonable, good sir, don’t think we are going to pay you homage for a superiority which at present is proclaimed only by your own modest assertions; permit us to cherish our disdain for your impotent arrogance *till* you have made your words good by gaining wealth, or power, or fame, and that time having arrived, why then, good sir, permit us to hate you for having defeated and humiliated us.” Still, it is a sad mistake this unkind treatment “penniless adventurers” meet with at the hands of society. When it is remembered what in all generations they have done for the state; how they have given us profound lawyers, the flower of the senate, daring soldiers who have won for us countries in every region of the earth, bold sailors who have subdued for us the ocean, it certainly does seem that it would be in better taste to receive the cadets of this vast family of heroes with less opposition and more courtesy. Burke was a young man who had to talk himself on in the world, and pompous Hawkins snubbed him accordingly. The great corporation in Leadenhall Street gained something from their patronage of two clever gentlemen in needy circumstances—Clive and Hastings. Nelson discovered that the world would never forgive him for being poor. England’s greatest captain long ere’ he fixed his Lares in Blenheim, had to supply his necessities by pursuits not exactly heroic. And yet it is not the great and powerful who are the most unkind opponents of the ambitious “soldier of fortune.” It is to be feared that an adventurer, who has made any decided advances towards success, finds his hottest enemies and most malignant traducers amongst the less fortunate of his own brethren—the penniless adventurers who have tried every wheel in the fair, and after all have failed to get their penny.

Benjamin Disraeli has experienced the lot of a penniless adventurer. None but he can tell the desperate efforts, the repulses, the destructive labour, and the stinging humiliations of pride, which his success has cost him!

He was born in London, in the December of 1805, the same year that saw the birth of Sir E. B. Lytton and Mr. H. Ainsworth. His father did not give him what is usually understood by the term "a liberal education;" he was not reared in the Eton and Oxford of his favoured heroes, but was taken from the suburban academy in which he had mastered some of the elements of learning, to be articled in the office of a metropolitan attorney. He was a remarkably precocious child, and while still a beardless youth resolved to emerge from the obscurity of his position. Rarely endowed with that peculiar beauty which is perhaps found in greatest excellence amongst the boys of the Hebrew race, and possessed of many fascinating arts, he soon became a favourite with women. His father's position gave him access to several *good entrances to good society*, and he never neglected an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the powerful and distinguished—especially of the fairer sex. With an elegant figure, different from the drooping one of the present statesman, a countenance expressive of an ardent imagination and refined intellect, and with graceful manners, the daring boy was the cause of good-humoured diversion and much wonder wherever he went. He was an egregious dandy—nearly all very *young* men of brilliant mental endowments are—and foppery to an extreme of extravagance was the mode with lads thirty years ago; but he outstripped every one of his competitors in personal adornment. At this day matrons of fashion often recal the graces, the separate trappings, and the entire appearance of Disraeli the Younger as he made his first essays in the great world—his ringlets of silken black hair, his flashing eyes, his effeminate air and lisping voice,

his dress coats of black velvet lined with white satin, his white kid gloves with the wrists surrounded by a long hanging fringe of black silk, and his ivory cane of which the handle inlaid with gold was relieved by more black silk in the shape of a tassel. Every one laughed at him for being affected, but the women declared that his was an affectation of the best style, and they felt his personal vanity was a flattering homage to their most notorious weakness. He was nervous and habitually silent, save when the rallying of female wit roused him to exertion, and then listeners discovered that he had remarkable conversational powers, disguised though they were by absurd mannerisms,—that he possessed a faculty of startling by paradoxes, was a consummate master of adulation, and had a satiric wit from which, at moments when such a display was least expected, would shoot a rocket, that in its ascent emitted clusters of stars, so numerous and propelled in so many directions, that it was impossible for the eye to contemplate at once all the many-coloured gems of light. Such was the perfumed boy-exquisite who forced his way into the saloons of peeresses. Men held him in light esteem; but observant women, who as a rule are much more discerning judges of young men than men themselves are, saw in him the elements of success, and prophesied that he would live to be a great man. He had a boundless ambition, an equal discontent with his humble birth and place in the world, intellects at least above the average, a power of controlling others, a love of intrigue only matched by his love of contention, a cold, calculating brain, a bitterly sarcastic eloquence, and capacity for cherishing ferocious hate. With such allies was not a man sure to succeed?

He left the odious office in which he was articled. If he was a Jew, he still would not be a Jew attorney. In his nineteenth year he visited Germany for a short time, and on his return to England, earnestly set to work with his pen. He

wrote "Vivian Grey," and published it while still a minor, and ere he had attained to legal manhood, he made his debüt in journalism in the columns of the short-lived opponent of "The Times" newspaper, the advocate of social injustice and religious persecution, "The Representative."

"Vivian Grey," is a remarkable production in itself, and also especially interesting, as a daguerreotype of Disraeli at this season of manly existence. It contains horrible and wildly improbable stories, the extravagances of a young imagination; it is replete with dazzling sarcasms and startling paradoxes; and it has more than a common share of the faults of first productions; its capricious digressions (those literary impertinences which can be permitted only to giants intoxicated with a consciousness of power) are painfully awkward gambols, and after the defeat of the hero in his scheme on the Marquis of Carabas, the novel is a narcotic. But the work is very valuable to any student of the statesman's character. "Vivian Grey" is the author himself; the men and women whom Vivian Grey cajoles and laughs at were the friends of the author, or distinguished personages of London society, of whom the clubs gossipped. Already Disraeli had conceived some strong hatreds, and he gratified them by holding their objects up to ridicule and contempt in his pages. After all, the personalities of a fashionable novel are cowardly libels which, if they are cautiously worded, the law cannot punish, the sufferers cannot effectually resist, and society does not condemn. Apart from attacks on these living individuals, "Vivian Grey" at the time of its publication was little more than an announcement that the author moved in good society, was entitled to move in better, and ought to be regarded as a gentleman of respectable antecedents. Vivian Grey's father was an eminent author, who was altogether indifferent to modern politics, never read a newspaper, and was an irrecoverable book-worm. Of course, in the gallery of

personal portraits which the new novel contained, this sketch was given to the only living writer of any eminence it resembled—Isaac Disraeli. “Vivian Grey’s” father, also had a life-estate of £2,000 per annum, and society were at liberty to believe that the same good fortune was attached to the antiquarian explorer. The author also takes the opportunity of giving his father a puff direct. During a morning’s flirtation at Château Désir, the seat of the Marquis of Carabas, with a certain lovely Miss Manvers, Vivian amuses himself with manufacturing autographs of celebrities for the young lady. “Come,” says he, “there’s Washington Irving’s autograph for you; read it, isn’t it quite in character. Shall I write any more?” One of Sir Walter’s, or Mr. Southey’s, or Mr. Milman’s, or Mr. D’Israeli’s, or shall I sprawl a Lord Byron?” An ingenious way of placing one’s father in the first rank of writers!

Such was Mr. Disraeli’s commencement as an author. “Vivian Grey” took, created scandal, made the author a man of mark.

The play was now begun, and the actor went on. He travelled, visiting Italy and Greece, and dwelt in Albania during the civil war. The winter of 1829-30, he passed at Constantinople, and the following spring he spent in Syria, Egypt, and Nubia. During these bursts of foreign travel, and the space between them, he was industrious with pen and tongue, writing and talking himself into notoriety. He wrote the “Young Duke,” and “Contarini Fleming,” and at least was preparing himself for his marvellous poems.

In 1832, Disraeli commenced with activity his public career as a politician. At this period the most favorable, and perhaps the true view of him is that he was an ambitious young man without political principles, but having in their place strong political sympathies. He doubtless believed himself to be that impossibility which he avowed he was—

a hybrid, compounded equally of staunch Tory and extreme radical. He was young, comparatively unknown, smarting under what he conceived to be a spiteful fortune; and it would be most unjust not to give him credit for some portion of warmth and generosity of feeling. He naturally, therefore, felt for the struggling multitudes made up of so many millions, striving, like him, after their petty objects of ambition, without powerful friends to aid them, and with few chances of achieving their modest desires. But his *tastes* were all aristocratic. The titles, the palaces, the splendours of the great were the things he most worshipped; his aim was to win by his intellects distinction amongst the most distinguished of the gay and polished world of fashion. His poetry found its goddesses in May-fair. Refinement, and the petty ambition to rank with one's betters, which we all sneer at and are free from till we have the means of gratifying it, made him an oracle of conservatism and all those patriotic platitudes which are agreeable to the ears of most persons who are led neither by affection nor interest to feel with their less fortunate brethren. Impelled by these two distinct sentiments, Mr. Disraeli presented himself to the astonished world as a Tory-Radical. At first there is every reason to believe he acted a very disingenuous part, and (unlike the celebrated Charles Matthews who always showed both aspects of his double costumes,) presented the Tory or the Radical side to his audience, as interest prompted, without at all times honestly displaying the reverse of his person. He called on Joseph Hume and O'Connell to support him as a radical desirous of supporting their views in parliament, and those great reformers recommended him to the constituency of High Wycombe, which borough he contested in 1832. His electioneering committee contained an equal number of Radicals and Tories; a Radical proposed him and a Tory seconded him. He satisfied the Radicals by promising to support in the House all propositions for the

ballot, triennial parliaments, and economical reform; and abused the Whigs with such fervour, that the Tories could not question that he was at heart with them. Every thing promised well for the adventurer at High Wycombe, when Mr. Hume was frightened by the assurance that the young Radical he had taken under his wing was in truth a Tory of the deepest dye. The consequence was that, although his letter recommending Mr. Disraeli had been, together with O'Connell's to the same purpose, printed and placarded in all the streets of Wycombe, Mr. Hume cancelled his recommendation, and used every exertion for the Whig candidate. The result of the election was the rejection of Mr. Disraeli. The papers were almost unanimous in calling him a barefaced charlatan; they called his profession of Conservatism mere truckling to an aristocratic party, who declined countenancing him, and his Radicalism they termed a dishonest use of words to induce the populace to support him, while he meant to betray them on the first opportunity. And though we by no means would support those charges, we cannot but see that it is impossible to *disprove* them, and that advocacy of two extreme opinions is the kind of coalition which England does not love.

In the spring of 1833, a vacancy was expected in the representation of Marylebone. Mr. Disraeli was again in the field, and, though the anticipated vacancy did not occur, he canvassed the borough on Radical principles, and issued an address, in which, after speaking of himself "as one of a family untainted by the receipt of public money," he said "I am desirous of completing the machinery of consolidation by two measures which will invest the people with what was once their birthright, and with a security, which I hope their children will inherit. *These measures are Triennial Parliaments and Election by Ballot: and unless these measures be conceded, I cannot apprehend how the con-*

duct of the government can ever be in harmony with the feelings of the people."

In the December of 1834, Mr. Disraeli was again at High Wycombe, spouting Radicalism and making his agricultural audience roar with laughter over his ludicrous comparison of the reform ministry to Mr. Ducrow. But his eloquence did not create that impression he so much desired. The rustics only laughed, and owned that he was a wonderfully clever fellow—indeed, too clever by half. Five months passed after this essay, and Radicalism laid aside, Mr. Disraeli appeared in the character of a full-blown, full-grown Tory at Taunton. His opponent was Mr. Labouchere, who had just accepted the Mastership of the Mint. The election was a stormy one, and the fame of his High Wycombe Radicalism caused the Conservative candidate to be awkwardly and roughly questioned. The crowd slanged him without mercy. "Did not you write a novel?" roared an elector, himself in all probability not capable of reading one. "I certainly have written a novel, but I hope there is no disgrace in being connected with literature." "You're a curiosity of literature, you are!" returned the chaffing elector. He was taunted with O'Connellism, and to clear himself from such an imputation he denounced the Irish agitator (who had rendered him good service, and whom only a few days before he had spoken of in terms of warm eulogy) as "a bloody traitor." The election terminated in favour of Mr. Labouchere. But the defeat at the poll was a trifle to the castigation Mr. Disraeli was to receive from the man whom he had so inexcusably insulted. O'Connell learnt from the papers the abusive words the young man whom he had befriended had applied to him, and he repaid the attack with a flood of sarcastic invective. It was at a meeting of the Franchise Association, in Dublin, that O'Connell made his memorable reply to the indefensible

attack. "He calls me," exclaimed the Agitator, "a traitor. My answer to that is—he is a liar. He is liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie." And he concluded by saying "I have the happiness to be acquainted with some Jewish families in London, and, amongst them, more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen, I have never met. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Mr. Disraeli as the descendant from a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must certainly have been from one of those that Disraeli is descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died on the cross." Very coarse abuse this; but the humour will bear the coarseness, and it was uttered by a man who knew his business—who knew what would tickle his audience and gall his adversary. A man who is wounded in a war of words should conceal his anguish, for otherwise he shows his enemy where to strike again. But Disraeli was so maddened by the laughter which O'Connell's invective awakened that prudence was impossible. If he saw a man smile, he accused the smile of mocking his defeat. Raging with fury Disraeli thirsted for vengeance; he knew the patriot never fought duels, having killed a man in early life and having then vowed never again to give or accept a challenge; he therefore demanded satisfaction of the Agitator's son, Mr. Morgan O'Connell, who had just fought Lord Alvanley for having insulted his father. The challenge was declined. Disappointed of his vengeance, Disraeli wrote a letter of vulgar abuse to O'Connell; and then reiterated his challenge to the son. Probably Mr. Morgan O'Connell would have

accepted this second invitation from any other man, but Mr. Disraeli's remarkable eccentricities in politics and literature had so strangely affected general society that he was looked upon as one not exactly accountable for his actions.

Mr. Disraeli's perseverance in attempting to get a parliamentary seat was eventually rewarded with success in 1837, when he was returned by the Maidstone Conservatives. In the first Parliament of our reigning Sovereign he took his place, when he had advanced far in the 32nd year of his age.

During those years of unsuccessful candidatures, from his first rejection as a Radical at High Wycombe to his triumph at Maidstone, he had kept his name well before the world. Every twelvemonth he perpetrated some extravagance in literature, or signalized himself in some intemperate newspaper squabble. The ridicule which his conflict with, and bombastic letter to, O'Connell had covered him, was not the only laughter he raised at his own expense. And whatever flagrantly grotesque impropriety he committed, he was the first to call the attention of the public to it. Many declared that his only object was to get people to talk about him; still he made it evident to every reader of the newspapers, that the sarcasms of the journals and the unaffected mirth of the clubs lashed him into frenzies that bordered on madness. In the December of 1835, he published his "Vindication of the English Constitution," in a letter to his friend, Lord Lyndhurst. The treatise in some respects improved, and in some respects damaged, his position with the world. It showed that he had studied history, but it showed also that he did not hesitate to falsify it, and to defy it, when it contradicted his prejudices, or irritated his caprice; in a word, it confirmed the general impression of his dishonesty, but it raised the public estimate of his acquirements and genius—it caused him to be regarded as a more powerful, and consequently a more dangerous man. The "Globe," in due course, reviewed the book, and also

the author's hybrid politics; the old taunt of his shamelessly avowing himself ready to serve either of the two especially hostile parties of the state that would employ him, was repeated; and he was reminded of his former readiness to enrol himself amongst O'Connell's followers. This last remembrancer was especially painful, as the newspapers had just left off extracting fun from the particulars of the O'Connell fracas. Mr. Disraeli responded to the article in the "Globe," and a fierce war of pens ensued. In its course Mr. Disraeli flatly denied ever having called on Mr. Hume, declaring that he had never been at Mr. Hume's house; and he also flatly denied ever having received a letter from him, stating that the letter formerly placarded at High Wycombe was addressed to a third person. Mr. Hume, who was a politician nobly destitute of animosity to individuals, and who had abstained from taking any part in the discussion, was appealed to by the "Globe," to declare the facts. Thus urged, Mr. Hume stated, in terms as gentle and inoffensive as possible, that Mr. Disraeli did call upon him, and that he himself did address a letter to Mr. Disraeli, the receipt of which letter was acknowledged with gratitude by that gentleman. In corroboration of these assertions, the correspondence was sent to the "Globe," and published. Enraged, but nothing abashed, by this exposure, Disraeli put a letter in the *Times*, giving Mr. Hume "the lie" direct. "It is obvious," said Mr. Disraeli to the great reformer, "that from the cautious mendacity of the commencement of your letter, you were aware that you were countenancing a lie." Yet two days afterwards he was compelled to admit that Mr. Hume had written to him, for he published a letter written to him by Mr. Bulwer, in 1832, in which the great novelist says, "I have received, from my friend, Mr. Hume, a letter addressed to you." The evidence against Mr. Disraeli was conclusive. Not only did Mr. Hume remember and Mr. Walter Scott

(Mr. Hume's secretary) have a distinct recollection of Mr. Disraeli's call in Bryanstone Square, but the last-named gentleman himself, after giving his former benefactor "the lie," was necessitated to eat his own words. These circumstances did not tend to place Mr. Disraeli's veracity in an enviable light before the world.

This contest was followed, four days afterwards, by the publication of the first of a series of letters in the *Times*, signed "Runnymede." These epistles were by Disraeli's pen *after Junius*, and were directed against the Whigs. The malignancy of these personal attacks is scarcely equal to the bombastic tone of the eulogies contained in them. To Lord John Russell, "Runnymede" said, "When you returned from Spain, the solitary life of travel and the inspiration of a romantic country, acting upon your ambition, had persuaded you that you were a great poet; your intellect, in consequence, produced the feeblest tragedy in our language." This sarcasm was a sad plagiarism on the part of "Runnymede," for it had been directed by critics over and over again against Mr. Disraeli and his poetical effusions. Lord Palmerston is described as having "a dexterity which seems a happy compound of the smartness of an attorney's clerk and the intrigues of a Greek of the Lower Empire," as "a Tory underling, whose audacity in accepting the seals of the Foreign Office, is only equalled by the imbecility of the Whigs in offering them to such a man." "Runnymede" concluded his letter to Lord Palmerston, whom he termed the "Lord Fanny of Diplomacy," with the following memorable words, "Methinks I can see your Lordship, the Sporus of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and menacing Russia with a perfumed cane." But "Runnymede" had another and a different strain for Sir Robert Peel, whom he addressed with a blatant magnificence, of which the following is a good specimen: "Before you receive this letter you will, in all pro-

bability, have quitted the halls and bowers of Drayton, those gardens and that library where you have realized the romance of "Verulam," and where you enjoy "the lettered leisure" that Temple loved. Your present progress to the metropolis may not be as picturesque as that which you experienced twelve months back, when the confidence of your sovereign and the hopes of your country summoned you from the galleries of the Vatican and the city of the Cæsars. It may not be as picturesque, but it is not less proud—it will be more triumphant. You are summoned now like the Knight of Rhodes, in "Schiller's Heroic Ballad," as the only hope of a suffering island. The mighty dragon is again abroad, depopulating our fields, wasting our pleasant places, poisoning our fountains, menacing our civilization. To-day he gorges at Liverpool—to-morrow he riots at Birmingham; as he advances near the metropolis terror and disgust proportionately increase. *Already we hear his bellow, more awful than a hyæna's—already our atmosphere is tainted with the venomous expirations of his malignant lungs; yet a little while and his incendiary crest will flame on our horizon, and we shall mark the horrors of his insatiate jaws and the scaly volume of his atrocious tail."*

By the side of his political-literary productions—his "Vindication of the English Constitution" (a rather strange thing, by the way, to *vindicate* to Englishmen), his "Crisis Examined," his "What is He?" in which the author for the trifling sum of sixpence unsuccessfully tried to show the world what his political principles were, and his epistles in *The Times*, Mr. Disraeli sent into the world a brisk succession of works, of a more imaginative character. He proclaimed a new theory of poetry. The true poet would henceforth disdain the fetters of verse, and express his glowing inspirations in turgid prose. This startling view he first favoured the world with in the pages of "Contarini Fleming," the psychological romance published the year after

the publication of the "Young Duke;" and in 1833, he gave the heedless nineteenth century a specimen of his original school of poetry, in "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy." and "The Rise of Iskander," in three volumes of such magnificent balderdash as no frantic Bedlamite ever yet equalled. The prayer-book translation of David's psalms, passages from Macpherson's Ossian, and delirium tremens were the raw material of which they were fabricated. Laughter alike expressive of derision and intense amusement at the new absurdity was the only response the muse of innovation received from men. Still Mr. Disraeli could console himself with reflecting that the most useful discoveries of the sublimest philosophers and the noblest creations of the best poets have at times been treated with like disdain. He had discovered and made known the great principle, that all true poetry was henceforth to be written in sonorous prose; and to show how much reliance he put on his own dicta he proceeded to the composition of "The revolutionary Epic"—an epic certainly not calculated to work any revolution in the public opinion of Mr. Disraeli's claims to poetic inspiration. It was in stiff, stilted, blank verse, far superior doubtless in the author's opinion to Milton's. It is not devoid of beautiful sentiments, and even expressions of deep wisdom, for it abounds in plagiarisms of the most inexcusable kind, from most of the masters of English writing; but it is not too much to say that in every particular of the entire work, which can fairly be attributed to the genuine and unaided powers of the author it is the most awkward, the weakest, and most pompous poem in the English language. The object he proposed to accomplish in it was avowed with superb candour in the preface. "Standing upon Asia, and gazing upon Europe," he wrote, "with the broad Hellespont between us, and the shadow of night descending on the mountains, these mighty continents appeared to me as it were the rival principles of government that at present contend

for the mastery of the world. "What!" I exclaimed, "is the Revolution of France a less important event than the siege of Troy?—Napoleon a less interesting character than Achilles? *For me* remains the 'Revolutionary Epic.'" Whether Disraeli has performed his task in a manner equal to the style of Homer, posterity, and not the present age, must judge.

The most memorable, as well as the best of Disraeli's works published before his entry into the senate of his country was "Henrietta Temple, a Love Story," given to the world in the November of 1836. This exquisite fiction is perhaps the best picture of the manners of the particular class, or rather section of a class, the author undertakes to describe, which can be found in any library. Its more sagacious readers perceived, though some of them hesitated to confess, that its author was really a man of genius, and not merely the extravagant fop and arrogant fool at whose vagaries they had for several years laughed. Dedicated to Count D'Orsay, whose intimate friendship Disraeli had long enjoyed, the interest of the story for the most part turns upon the life of that division of "the great world," which the Count led, and it contains a flattering picture of all the agreeable points of that polished, gifted, graceful, admired, and amiably selfish Frenchman. Critics, who were disappointed, and even infuriated, at finding that the man whom for years they had deluged with contempt was after all possessed of no common powers in the profession, of which they were rather troublesome than dignified members, made many objections to a few frantic love-scenes and passages of furious declamation which were said to be in the old vein of mad nonsense; but the verdict of public opinion was in decided opposition to these censures; the volumes of the new novels were perused by all ranks, and in their pages, the highborn and distinguished moved without the labour of bodily action through the brilliant rooms and amongst

the same faces that they saw in the ordinary course of their lives, and humble folk—the rustics of remote villages, the shopkeepers of cities, the workers in factories, and the meanest servants of servants—became acquainted with the polished wit, the varied foibles, the polite amusements, and refining beauty of those patrician circles which the twenty-four letters and the novelist's pen alone affords them the means of entering.

In "Henrietta Temple," Disraeli not only achieved a work immeasurably superior to any previous production of his genius, but also one far better than anything that has since come from the same source. The next book was so much below the standard of the "Love Story," that the new and hardly-won reputation of the writer was materially injured, and the world returned from their warm eulogies to the old depreciations and sarcasms. The conception of "Venetia," published in the May of 1837, was as ill-judged and ridiculous as that of "Alroy" or "The Revolutionary Epic." In it Disraeli proposed no less a task than the delineation of Byron and Shelley. That he was a man at all qualified to throw any new light on the characters of these poets, few can believe; and, as far as the novel can enable us to judge, it would appear that he distrusted his own power to analyze and critically examine the minds of his heroes. He contented himself with dealing with a few of the more prominent and well-known events of their sadly instructive lives, and with fashioning those incidents into what would have been a very readable novel, if the materials had been taken from imagination instead of history. The most superficial and common-place views are taken of Byron. His dark passions, and all their sad consequences are attributed to the disappointed affections of his youth. The ill-temper of his mother, the Mary Chaworth Romance, the alternate dissipations of excess and of asceticism, the affectations of dress and

manner," and the capricious temper of the author of "Childe Harold," are made unsparing use of; but not one original thought does the writer of "Venetia," bestow upon his task. When he exclaimed against the cruelty and injustice of society to the erring but gifted poet (my Lord Cadurcis—alias Byron) he, with that audacious and *fearless* dishonesty which is the characteristic of his literary, as well as oratorical pilferings, incorporated in the narrative of his tale the memorable passages of an Edinburgh article, (on Moore's "Life of Byron,") not then generally known as Macaulay's. These extracts were made in a manner that can leave in no one's mind a doubt of the plagiarism being one of the very worst kind; they were transplanted to the pages of "Venetia," some seven years after their first publication. When the mass of readers had forgotten them, without any hint by inverted commas, or otherwise, to indicate their parentage, they were transcribed verbatim from a Magazine article; and it was not till "Venetia" was lately republished in a popular form that the stolen property was ticketed with "these observations of a celebrated writer, apply to the instance of Lord Cadurcis." The great mistake of "Venetia," is that of its entire plan and scope. Men had universally perused with deep and contending emotions Moore's copious and engrossing memorials of Byron; they knew also, every circumstance connected with Shelley, that Mr. Benjamin Disraeli could tell them; they had meditated long and with solemn sensations on both those awful dramas;—even plain *matter-of-fact* men, who fixed their intelligence on business and "main chances," had pondered with tears and prayer over *the facts* which preserve to us the memory of the two foremost poets of these later days; and it was with feelings of natural and yet no common disgust, that they beheld in "Venetia," the grand tragedies of their contemplations converted into a melodrama scarcely fit for the Surrey Theatre, the conclusion of which is the drowning in

company of both poets, just as they have learnt the error of their ways and become respectable men.

Mr. Disraeli had at length obtained the position of a member of Parliament, and his first essay in the house was a most characteristic one, in every way a fit beginning to the senatorial career of the writer who had made many absurd failures, and eventually achieved success, in literature. He positively attempted in his maiden speech to crush the powerful Irish agitator who had insulted him on the tender point of his pedigree, and whom he had threatened signally to chastise in the presence of the Commons of England. The rash and absurd undertaking well illustrated his ignorance of the assembly he addressed, and the immeasurable insolence of his self-esteem. The result of his speech is well known. The violent abuse and raw sarcasm he poured upon O'Connell had no other effect than that of throwing the house into tumults of laughter; the ridiculous nature of the whole scene is beyond description, and the ignominy of the young member's defeat is unparalleled. To him not the least cruel part of his well-merited punishment, was the sight of his adversary contributing his thunder to the deafening laughter that arose from every corner of the house.

It is frequently said that one of the consequences of this signal discomfiture, was that Mr. Disraeli immediately set to work to acquire the peculiar style of oratory that "takes" in the house, and that he speedily altered the manner and matter of his public addresses. This we have no hesitation in saying is quite erroneous; we have been assured by competent judges who heard the memorable oration of the 7th of December, 1837, and who have heard nearly every important speech made in the House of Commons since that period, that Mr. Disraeli's subsequent speeches differ in no important respect from his first one, except in the fluency, the polish, and the infor-

mation which practice and study have given him. The fact is, the circumstances that surrounded his maiden speech, and the very subject of it, revived in the minds of his hearers (prepared to be amused) all that was most ridiculous and contemptible in his previous history. Every one was familiar with the homage he had once paid and the treachery he had been guilty of to O'Connell, the agitator's sarcasm directed against his Hebrew descent, and the consequences of that sarcasm—the challenge, the threats of vengeance, and the furious declarations of hate. Those who took the kindest view of Mr. Disraeli's conduct, had found excuse for the impetuous letters, and bombastic avowals of his political honour, in the temporary irritation of his feelings smarting under insult. Not even his enemies, or those who thought his inordinate conceit caused him to be little better than a madman, had deemed him such a fool as in his calmer moments to think he could carry his threats into effect. Yet his virgin effort was to inflict condign punishment on that remarkable man, whose eloquence and talents for business were not less admired by his enemies than his followers.

Added to these circumstances was the extraordinary, and to some eyes comical, appearance of the speaker. His long flaky ringlets, his thin pale face of the most marked Hebraic style, the effeminate care lavished on his costume, his harsh and ungovernable voice, were new to many members who were familiar with his actions. At all times Mr. Disraeli's remarkable exterior, as is frequently the case with remarkable things, invited satire as much as approval but when its grotesqueness was rendered doubly emphatic by the impetuous movements of his arms, the writhings from anguish of his pallid face, and the flashes of rage that came from his usually lustreless eyes, the effect was painfully absurd.

What has been Mr. Disraeli's course in Parliament need

not here be stated, for every turn in it is familiar to the minds of men. How he cautiously waited ere he spoke again till the House had in a slight degree forgotten the merriment caused by his first display; how he then by degrees became bolder and bolder, as his power of personality and invective became appreciated; how in the session of 1839 he courageously avowed his sympathy with the Chartists, and by that means gained the *distinction* of Ministerial reproof; how he never let an opportunity escape him of uttering panegyrics on the commanding abilities, the pure and stern morality, the colossal magnanimity of Sir Robert Peel; how in 1841, and later, he sought and failed to obtain a subordinate place from that great minister; how he advocated the principles of Free Trade because they were dear to Tory policy, and had been advocated by Mr. Pitt and Lord Shelburn; how in 1843, when he clearly saw that Sir Robert Peel distrusted and despised him, he withdrew from the tail of that eminent politician, and (with a courage and perseverance and ingenuity, the beauties of which were scarcely tarnished by the fiendish hate with which he was animated), exerted all his powers to make that strong man feel that the world contained a stronger; how he exhibited such adroitness, such wit, and such knowledge of the nature of his contemptuous antagonist, that even those who detested his want of high principle in wounding a noble and patriotic statesman to gratify private malice, were ere long compelled to sympathize with his hardihood, and feel satisfaction at his success; how he, by the pertinacity and sharpness of his satire drove Sir Robert Peel from the proud resolve not "to bandy personalities," taunting him with perfidy, accusing him, with a subtlety that made defence all but impossible, of falsehood, and of deception meaner and more despicable than any tissue of direct lies, sneering at him for his pompous love of quotation, mocking

his high sounding professions of morality, caricaturing the undignified habits and attitudes he indulged in when addressing the house, and making him ridiculous even in the eyes of his most loyal admirers; how his attacks on the Premier, as the division between Sir Robert Peel and the country party became more imminent, increased in violence and power; and when the rent, never to be patched up, was accomplished, how those fierce declarations, inspired by private animosity, assumed in the eyes of a maddened faction the colours of noble and disinterested public services; how he first under cover of Lord George Bentinck, and then upon the demise of that member of "a Venetian Aristocracy," in his own person, led the country party in the House of Commons—that body of proud patricians on whom his satire and contempt have poured ridicule, the freshness of which will last for ever; how for a long period he cried aloud that the bread tax might be replaced on the shoulders of the millions with whom he had professed a poet's and a politician's sympathy; how on this cry he and his party clamorously forced their hard-won way to ten months of power, during which brief official existence they deserved well of their country, by boldly avowing that the Protectionists were simply their dupes, and by passing more liberal measures than are ordinarily gained from six sessions of a moderate reform ministry; how during his short tenure of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, he astonished the weak minds of country gentlemen and rich shopkeepers by showing them that an ambitious and intelligent man of letters can make a budget as easily as write a work, and that arithmetic is a science as easily mastered as any other—and yet further startled and also scandalized the nation by reciting in honour of the great Duke, as his own speech as leader of the House, a translation of a second-rate French oration; how since his retirement from that brief tenure of office, he has imparted by the force of his almost unaided genius,

and the brilliance of his unaccompanied wit, animation and purpose to his party ; and finally, how he for a second time figures as Chancellor of the Exchequer, with abilities and qualifications for that highest financial post, which it would be absurd to speak of with disrespect.

All these points in his political career are too familiar to the public to require any detailed narrative from us ; for, much as the conduct of all, even the most insignificant, public men is canvassed by the great theatre of amused, and idle, and jealous, and sometimes admiring spectators, there never has been a politician who has been so abundantly talked about as Mr. Disraeli. A halo of romance is around him, which the envy of his enemies and the condemnation of many worthy moralists only render more bright. The gigantic obstacles, both of an unkind fortune and created by his own folly, over which he has triumphed, the detraction which, if he has not outlived it, he has for a time silenced, the flagrant inconsistencies of his public life, the brilliance of his mental endowments, the variety of his attainments, the remarkable character of many of his more peculiarly personal experiences, the magnitude of his debts at the most critical part of his adventurous contest, the dexterity with which he won the ample wealth he now enjoys, his hair-breadth escapes from ruin, and his dazzling success, all make him an object of wonderment to the simple, and of interest to the curious.

Of late years, save for the purpose of inditing an electioneering address, or correcting "the proof" of a report of a speech, Mr. Disraeli's pen has been idle : probably he sees that, as far as he is immediately concerned, that orange has been sucked dry, and resolves like a truly *practical* man, as he emphatically is, no longer to labour in an art that has already done him all the service he can hope for from her. His ceasing to furnish wares for the booksellers is not the only fact which points to this conclusion ; for on more than

one occasion he has, since the publication of "Lord George Bentinck's Life," raised his voice against the interests of the press and literature, and has manifested a desire to break down the ladder by which he has climbed to eminence. At the commencement of his parliamentary career it was far otherwise; it was by the pen he had forced his way into the legislative assembly, and by the pen he rightly judged his position in it was to be maintained. In the May of 1839, he published "The Tragedy of Count Alarcos, by the author of Vivian Grey." This tragedy, more flagrantly false to every rule of art, weaker in every poetic quality, and perhaps more densely populated with awkward crudities and pompous affectations than season "The Revolutionary Epic," was dedicated to Lord Francis Egerton. Mr. Disraeli is a remarkable example of the habit, very common amongst young authors, of drawing attention to the feebleness of poor books, by affixing to them pretentious and magnificent introductions or prefaces. He never wrote a book unworthy of his powers that he did not claim for it the approval of the public in terms, so ridiculously arrogant, that they put the reader out of humour, and made him disinclined to do even bare justice to the author. It was so with "Count Alarcos;" to state that in composing it he had desired to interest and instruct those who care to *peruse* dramas which would not bear being put upon the stage, was not enough for the author; by no means,—his object was to revolutionize the educated world, and replace the drama in its ancient state of classic dignity and influence. He wrote to Lord Francis Egerton, "I dedicate to a poet, an attempt to contribute to the revival of English Tragedy." In 1844 "Coningsby; or, the New Generation" was published; in 1845 he issued to the world "Sybil, or the two Nations." The year 1847 saw the birth of "Tancred, or the New Crusade;" the author's latest work is the "Political Biography of Lord George Bentinck."

It is upon these books that Mr. Disraeli's reputation, as an author, principally rests, and therefore it will be necessary to devote a short space of time to their consideration. Of the "Political Biography," a subject of deep pain and humiliation to the author's warmest partizans, it is unnecessary to say much; in it Mr. Disraeli displayed no noble power which the world was not well aware he possessed, but he exhibited the excess of certain base qualities which even his hottest adversaries had hesitated to accuse him of. The fierce conflict he had had with Sir Robert Peel had long since terminated, and in the eyes of many he was the victor; anyhow Sir Robert had been hurled from his lofty eminence with loud and furious maledictions on his treachery, that for a time drowned the less clamorous thanksgivings of grateful millions, and *he*—the once despised adventurer—who skilfully guided the storm, which great events had raised, had contrived in the period of hurricane and uproar to clutch the prize he most desired, to gratify at the same time his hate and his ambition, to point the catastrophe of his haughty foe, and to seize the captaincy of a powerful and aristocratic faction. For a time after the first subsidence of the storm, he kept guard over his revengeful passions, and withheld himself from repetitions of his acrimonious attacks on the once powerful, but then only *popular*, minister; his forbearance was observed by the nation, and applause was bestowed on his *good taste*, that was due only to his *prudence* which avoided raising in men's minds a favourable reaction towards the statesman who had been degraded, for his patriotism, and punished for his noble forgetfulness of self. Death came, and robbed the nation of one of the most heroic sons she had ever possessed; the dreaded reaction could no longer be delayed;—and on the first opportunity, the occasion of writing the memoir of a friend and coadjutor in politics, Mr. Disraeli spurned the dead clay and insulted the memory of him whose brightest fame commenced with his death.

“Coningsby,” “Sybil,” and “Tancred,” are the works of fiction most frequently mentioned in connection with Mr. Disraeli’s name; they are all very inferior to “Henrietta Temple,” but they are better known and more generally liked, partly because they were written by a man who had become celebrated, and partly because they are supposed to unfold some of the peculiar views of the political and religious Benjamin Disraeli. For ourselves, we do not hesitate to say that no sufficient and worthy cause can be found in these books for the high esteem in which they were generally held at their time of publication, and that they are altogether unworthy of the author of the inimitable “Love Story.” In each of them Mr. Disraeli proposed to illustrate important political principles, and to proclaim certain historical truths, which, if not altogether unknown, had been long disregarded. Veneration for the past was the sentiment which he wished especially to arouse in “Coningsby” and “Sybil,” and to accomplish this he popularized in their pages the heresies and false logic and exquisite poetry of Carlyle’s “Past and Present,” just as in “Venetia,” he had vulgarized the biographies of Byron and Shelley. In the multitude of political opinions that crowd the chapters of these books, not one is original, though many of them bear the impress of mannerism given them by the tamperer with coin; but Mr. Disraeli made up for the lack of novel argument and information which characterized his books, by liberal donations of historical paradoxes. In the golden age of Feudalism, England was blessed with benignant rulers, a contented people, and never-failing plenty; riots and sickness were as unknown as oppression, starvation, or famine. This view of “the past,” (which, by the way, is used as a vehicle of compliment to the ancient territorial aristocracy of England), is contrasted with the vices of our present social condition—the misery and turbulence of the poor, and the universal selfishness of the rich, save in the

cases of a few gentlemen of Norman descent, who of course derive from their remote ancestors a strong repugnance to any conquest of the weak.

The refined manners, imposing persons, exalted patriotism, and chivalric self-abnegation of the pure noble, are placed side by side with the vulgar address, undignified appearance, sordid meanness, and brutal lusts of the plebeian; not that all the patrician heroes are made free from vice; some of them indeed are avowed villains; but then such a glow of aristocratic splendour and dignity and romance is infused into their seductions and forgeries, that no one in his senses would wish to judge them by the same moral code by which the actions of common people must be measured; and not that the mere possession of a title is held full proof of patrician excellence, for consistently with all his previous writings, Mr. Disraeli covers with ridicule all nobility of a creation later than the Reformation, and laughs abundantly at the assumptions of modern peers, who, coming from the loins of German valets and Scotch hucksters, claim descent from the best of William's barons. The strong seasoning of personal slander in "Coningsby" tickled the diseased palate of the pseudo-fashionable world of England, and more especially of America: it was this quality—this want of charity, which clothed its innumerable failings, and induced readers, in gratitude for the "capital fun" of Mr. Croker's portrait, and the "terrible exposure" of the Marquis of Hertford's excesses, to pardon the bombastic style and vulgar tone of the entire work. "Sybil" is superior to "Coningsby," for though it has all the faults of the latter, it has merits of its own, and is rich in pictures of the extreme classes of society—the magnates of Mayfair, and the slaves of mills and mines, which will bear comparison with the most forcible descriptions of Bulwer and Dickens. Its best parts impress a judicious reader, as strongly even as "Henrietta Temple," with a feeling of

what great things the writer might have done in literature if he had avoided the day dreams of his tempestuous and weak imagination, and confined himself to the delineation of the world he lived in. The worst feature of "Sybil," is the delicate fastidiousness which the author continually manifests in dealing with the vile creatures who people his stage, and the subjects which he makes a practice of boldly discussing. He talks of the most depraved and brutal of our populace—*the other nation*, indeed—but he is speaking of them and their condition to patrons of fashionable circulating libraries; so, like the preachers in West-end chapels, he no sooner shocks the feelings of those he addresses by the utterance of a startling and solemn truth, than he soothes their alarm by the smooth common-places of the drawing-room. In "Sybil" the Chartists are wonderfully painted, perhaps better than in any other of the many books written about them; it is for the Chartists that our strongest sympathies are aroused; the hero is a Chartist! and so is the heroine! What think you of this, society? Nay, moderate your indignation:—*The Chartist hero, the hard-handed workman and leader of workmen, is of noble Norman extraction, entitled to a vast estate; and his daughter, the Chartist heroine, ends by becoming a peeress!* Bah! is not this sickening trash worse than nonsense? is it not impiety?

Of "Tancred" little need be said. How Mr. Disraeli came at his time of life to *write* a novel, so completely unworthy of him, is a problem; how he came to *publish* anything so replete with charlatanry and nonsensical jugglery, and consequently so calculated to remind men of the most unfavourable parts of his own history, can never be satisfactorily explained. It was natural that he should desire to put his despised race in a favourable light before the world; in his youth, unless he is wronged, he acutely felt the ignominy of being a member of the *once* chosen nation, and in his long contest with life the obloquy he earned

troubled him little in comparison with that which he had inherited ; at first the scorn he met in consequence of his Hebraic extraction robbed him of all power of resistance ; after a while, however, O'Connell's sarcasm and the taunts of the House of Commons stung him from the cowed condition of a whipped spaniel, and he paid back the insults of his contemners with a flood of bitter recrimination in which anguish contended with hatred. It has frequently been his courageous plan in striking at his foes to aim at the point where he had the reputation of being especially weak ; thus in "Runnymede" he had sneered at Lord John Russell's poetry, when he knew that he himself was generally believed to have written verses far more contemptible ;—thus, he now directed the shafts of his fury against the *flat-nosed* Frank, full of bustle and puffed up with self-conceit,—a race spawned perhaps in the morasses of some Northern Forest hardly yet cleared. No one with a spark of generosity in his nature can withhold his sympathy or admiration from Mr. Disraeli's spirit in fighting the battle of his nation ; some may sneeringly suggest that the championship might well have commenced earlier ; but none will allow that it had better not have begun at all. But unfortunately for Mr. Disraeli and the cause he had undertaken, "Tancred" is not at all calculated to remove the prejudices under which the Jews in England, and indeed in all Christendom, labour. Extravagant claims are advanced concerning their right, mentally, and morally, and physically, to be esteemed as the foremost people of the earth ; but there is no attempt worthy the name of attempt, made to prove this astounding position, nor does the author succeed by skilfully appealing to our affections in making sentiment do what argument is powerless to accomplish. The slender knowledge displayed of the Jewish history, and the utter ignorance manifested of the present position and aspirations of the Hebrews, strike even casual readers. Indeed Mr. Disraeli's

Jew of the nineteenth century is no more a real living character than is his modern-antique peasant with double wages on a ducal estate; they are both the offspring of his imagination, which is the most erratic, and least respectable of his mental endowments. The story of Tancred is briefly this:—Young Tancred of Montacute, a young noble of the spawn of the before-mentioned Northern forest, the heir to a dukedom and to wealth, the like of which no nobleman out of Mr. Disraeli's novels ever inherited, is seized with a desire to go to the Holy Land. He is just emerging from boyhood, and is anxious to settle in his own mind what he ought to do in life, what power of light or darkness he ought to serve, prosaically—what political party he ought to join. In his perplexity he conceives the happy idea of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land: his ancestors went there: why then, should not he? In time of old God appeared to men in that sacred region: why should not he be equally favoured? After talking over his oriental plans, somewhat fantastically at London parties, the young man buys his yacht and sails from his native shores in company with a physician to preserve his health, a colonel to protect his body from ruffianly assailants, and a clergyman of the church of England to look after his orthodoxy. Before bidding farewell to England, however, he calls in the city on Sidonia, that romantic Rothschild whom Disraeli created and believes in for the honour of his race. Montacute went to this singular gentleman for letters of credit on some Eastern banking-houses, and also for an insight into the position and destinies of the race. The interview between them reaches its highest point of interest when "Sidonia seemed lost in thought; and then looking up, said, 'It appears to me, Lord Montacute, that what you want is to *penetrate the great Asian Mystery!*' 'You have touched my most *inmost thought,*' said Tancred eagerly.'" !!! With little advice or information, but with effective letters

of credit, Tancred of Montacute departs from the loan-broker's office, and in due course arrives at the Holy Land, where he goes through a series of adventures which are life-like only because in some particulars they put one in mind of the "Arabian Nights." He fell in love with a rare beauty of the correctest Oriental style; he was taken possession of by banditti, or an Asian Tribe; had, if our memory does not fail us, his head cut open and almost died of a fever; but that he gained anything from this notable excursion, beyond the usual perils and inconveniences which encompass every rash youth who trips it to Jerusalem, and persists in walking about under a burning sun, when he ought to be lying down in the shade, does not appear. What insight he obtained into "the Great Asian Mystery" we are not informed, or whether he was favoured with any Divine illumination. Indeed we are left rather in the dark as to what is meant by "the Great Asian Mystery," for Sidonia and the great Asian writer are alike silent on the subject. The tale concludes by the young lord getting back from his period of skirmishing, and captivity, and delirium, to Jerusalem—in which city he is taken possession of by his papa and mamma who have come out in search of him—their only child.

"Colonel Brace began to explain, but all seemed to speak at the same time.

"The Duke and Duchess of Bellamont had arrived in Jerusalem."

Any simple person who opens "Tancred" in the hope of being enlightened on any question whatever connected with the modern or ancient Israelites, will close it either a disappointed or a deluded man. He will find the facts of history only casually alluded to, and then almost always to be made light of; he will find himself greeted in almost every page with the staggering assertion that the Hebrew race must be far superior to any other, because our Saviour

in his humanity was one of that sternly chastised people ; and he will be continually shocked by the levity and indecent familiarity with which the author makes mention of sacred subjects. For the rest, the tale is no more a picture of Eastern manners than the " Arabian Nights " are a picture of American society. No purpose, beyond that which impels the bray of the not most dignified beast of burden, is discoverable in it ; no earnestness inspired it ; at the best it is only an extravagant expression of a national sentimentality, as much the offspring of shame as of pride. The Oriental " properties " are of the most flimsy description ; the dresses, the scenery, the language are taken from popular books on Eastern Travel ; and ever and again the wit of " Eothen " peeps out from beneath the frippery of Monmouth Street. The following instance out of many that can be produced, will illustrate this last remark.

The sight of " a superb Saracenic Castle " suggests the following humorous touch in " Tancred."

" In the mean time, Freeman and Trueman, (Tancred's servants) who were far in the rear amid Fakradeen's attendants, exchanged congratulatory glances of blended surprise and approbation.

" ' This is the first gentleman's seat I have seen since we left England,' said Freeman."

This puts us in mind of " Eothen," ch. ii., where we read of " Methley's Yorkshire servant, who," in the desert, " always rode doggedly in his pantry jacket, looking out for gentlemen's seats."

But time and space compel us to bid farewell to Mr. Disraeli. As a novelist he is no common writer ; and we believe that his fictions, with all their faults, will be read with interest and gratitude by posterity. They are rich in defects, but they contain better pictures of the selectest part of the *beau monde* than are to be found in the writings of any other author. It is true, that at times he makes his

characters too much the grand personages of a theatrical representation, stiff, stilted, and bombastic with all their magnificence; and it is no less true that when he describes our aristocracy he exaggerates their wealth, and pays a slavish and offensive homage to it, measuring the refinement of every family by the gross and vulgar standard of money. It must also be conceded that, independently of his slavish adoration of money and rank he is emphatically an immoral writer. Nowhere does he seem desirous of inculcating any permanently ennobling views in his readers' minds, although he of all authors *affects* to arouse and inform the moral sentiment; in his books virtue is a dull subject that had better not be handled deliberately, but aristocratic vices—debts, mistress-hunting, gambling, seduction, duelling, and political perfidy—are rendered alluring and pleasing enough. He and Thackeray alike leave the reader with an impression that the world of fashion is a wide scene of selfishness and evil passion, covered only by a thin veil of graceful affectations and the hypocrisies of good-breeding. But Thackeray makes us profoundly sad at the world being so constituted, so very unlike that good one which he takes care to show it might be; while the reader of “Vivian Grey” and “Coningsby” exults in the depravity of society, and acknowledges that any change for the better would be for the worse. But these drawbacks being made, and these defects set down to their right sources—the money-worship to the Hebraism, the rank-worship to the plebeian extraction, and the lax tone of morality to the singularly worldly career of the author—there is an ample field still left wherein to exercise our admiration.

The political future of Mr. Disraeli is a curious subject of speculation. Will he rise to be greater than he is? or will he sink to be less? Has he seen his day? Will he be allowed to retain the leadership of the country party? If not, will he be content to sink down into one of the led? or

will he seize the captaincy of another band of politicians? Unquestionably just at the present crisis he is behind a cloud, or his splendour has waned. His eloquence, at the best of a second-rate kind, and remarkable more for having produced an effect so disproportioned to its merit than for anything else, is generally asserted to be insufficient for the leader of the house. There are many who do not hesitate to classify him amongst "the bores," "the wind-bags," "the endless talkers" of the Commons; and, whereas, at the height of the anti-Peel contest, his were the speeches which were listened to by friends and adversaries with breathless attention, and were interrupted with enthusiastic applause, there are *now* not a few of the foremost members who, immediately they see him rise on his legs, systematically leave the assembly for refreshment, or compose themselves for slumber. The comparative flatness with which his orations fall on the house may be learnt from the parliamentary reports of the daily journals, where long columns of dreary common-places are broken only by an occasional "hear, hear," and it is only at the concluding perorations, invariably containing a few personal "hits," or patriotic "points," that his adherents cheer to testify their fidelity. Out of doors Mr. Disraeli does not stand better. In the clubs and in the country it is manifest that he has no hold whatever, firm or feeble, on the affections of any class. Those of the educated classes, who are best disposed to him, praise his "cleverness," but they hesitate to speak well of his statesmanship, and are silent when allusion is made to his public morality. The adroitness with which he cajoles an audience of country bumpkins, his masterly stroke of once wearing top-boots at an agricultural meeting, and his satire, are the subjects on which his partisans expend their praise. In the provinces the esteem in which he is held is one of undisguised contempt; from the minds of honest farmers, the errors and obliquities of his early career will

never be effaced ; slow to receive a new idea, and vehement in defending opinions when once embraced, they have agreed to regard Mr. Disraeli as an embodiment of all that is dishonest and ridiculous, and over this conviction Mr. Disraeli by no exercise of cunning, no blarney, no palaver, not even by persistence in honourable exertion—will ever triumph. The principal members of the Conservative party are alive to this, and know well that however useful Mr. Disraeli has been to them, and however well he performed the functions of a mouth-piece to their hatred for the renegade Peel, he has robbed them of respectability and weight in the eyes of the country-freeholders. The charlatanry of the Christianized Jew, the Radical-Tory, the pirate of other men's writings, and orator of stolen speeches, attaches to his followers, although they are country gentlemen of broad acres, and unimpeachable morality. They would get rid of him, if they were able ; but he is too good a rider to be thrown by the steed which he caught, when running wild, and made obedient to spur and rein. They bear their fate, as a convict who has served half his term of slavery, looking with patience to a sure point of the future, and trusting that a ticket-of-leave may arrive even sooner than that expected time of release. In the mean time they follow in the tail of their singular commander ; loyally support him in the house ; and periodically make mention of him, in the long vacations, to gibing provincials, not as a British statesman, an Englishman of English sympathies, but “a gentleman whose transcendent talents have raised him to the proud position of being called upon to take part in the counsels of his sovereign.” It is remarkable that this form of apologetic claptrap is invariably used by Conservative members, addressing agricultural audiences whenever they allude to their chief.

Such is the aspect of things at the present time. But the future may have a different picture in store for us ; and

it is possible for Mr. Disraeli, ere he die, to be a strong, if not a popular minister. He comes of a long-lived family, his father and grandfather retaining their faculties to extreme old age. He is not much over fifty. Perchance, after the expiration of another quarter of a century, he may be an octogenarian premier and the idol of the nation. For him to rise from his present position to such an eminence, would be a less step than the one already made from the hustings of High Wycombe to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Another crisis, similar to that of the Corn-Laws, may arise, and fierce denunciations may be required against another Sir Robert Peel; under such circumstances, Mr. Disraeli's peculiar faculty—his genius—will be needed, and he will not fail to use it. It is even just upon the cards that he may grow to be respected by the great body of the British people. As it is, he is not in respect of political *versatility* a whit blacker than half the conspicuous and admired statesmen of the present century. Indeed, by the side of some, who stand well enough in the eyes of the world, he is a pattern of probity and rectitude. At present he is (although twice a minister) a political adventurer." But the time may come, when the removal of corrupting influence from the *respectable* members of our constituencies will infuse a higher morality into the masses of electors in our boroughs and counties, and will enable the doctor who now sells his vote to his best patient, the lawyer who now sells his vote to his best client, and the entire British public, who now harangue with edifying horror against bribery but wallow in corruption—will enable all these, satisfied and at ease with themselves, and rendered charitable by a sense of individual honour, to view with greater leniency the failings and sins of "political adventurers."

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

"WHICH is your favourite—Thackeray or Dickens?" is the ordinary question with which strangers, who are thrown together in a party and are casting about for a topic advance to a conversation on matters literary. To ask your friend whether he prefers grapes to olives, or curries to lemon ices, would be quite as much in accordance with common sense. Indeed the two great novelists of the day are so diametrically opposed, that it is impossible to compare them, and pass judgment on them as we could on any of the two same species. Winter and summer, an opera-dancer and an athlete, a steam locomotive and a musical snuff-box, are not more unlike than are these two writers, the monthly numbers of whose works bear no more mutual resemblance than do the sheets of fresh green and yellow sear in which they are enclosed. The writer of past times with whom the author of "Pendennis" is usually compared, is Fielding, and unquestionably the style, tone, and object of Thackeray's writings justify the comparison, although in no point do they lay him open to the charge of being an imitator of the author of "Tom Jones." That Thackeray himself feels that he in this generation occupies the place in literature which Fielding held more than a century ago, is evidenced by several passages in his writings, besides the memorable preface to "Pendennis," where he confesses that a timid regard for the prejudices of a society which "will not tolerate the Natural in our Art" restrained him from speaking as boldly as he desired, and where he laments that since the

author of "Tom Jones" was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a *Man*. There is rife amongst us a spirit of pedantry (not less contemptible than that which for generations declared any Latin poem superior to the best English one) which will not admit the possibility of any living author being worthy of comparison with the old novelists; but no one capable of appreciating the wonderful genius of Fielding will think dishonour done to it by him who claims for Thackeray an equally exalted position, and no one but a malignant and an imbecile will charge Thackeray with presumption in recognizing the points of similarity between himself and his great forerunner. Still, strong as the resemblance is Thackeray is other than Fielding; he has a less genial temper, perhaps a less subtle humour than the creator of Miss Bridget Alworthy and Partridge, and at times he writes with a cold bitterness and a gloomy misanthropy which the most savage excesses of Swift do not surpass, but throughout his works there are discernible a deep, lively, unvarying love of the good and beautiful, an earnestness of purpose, and the noblest kind of religious fervour, that one in vain looks for in "Tom Jones" and "Amelia."

William Makepeace Thackeray sprang, like all the rest of us, from a good old stock, the Thackeray family being of considerable antiquity and influence. His grandfather was the Rev. Richard Thackeray, of Hadley, Middlesex; and his father had a lucrative post in the civil service of the East India Company. The author was born in Calcutta, in 1811, and was sent to England to be educated, after he had passed the first years of his childhood under an oriental sun. On his way from India to the remote European island, to which that vast continent is attached, the vessel stopped at a certain barren, rocky isle, and the child, under the guardianship of his black servant, paid that visit

to the great Napoleon's residence which he so humourously described in one of his late lectures on "The Georges."

In due time the boy was placed in the Charterhouse School—the school in which Steele and Addison, Tupper and Reynolds (the author of "The Mysteries of London,") were birched into scholarship, and which has been celebrated in several of Thackeray's writings. Little Rawdon Crawley, Pendennis, and Clive Newcome were all educated at the Charterhouse. It was as a poor brother of the Charterhouse that the dear old Colonel Newcome bade farewell to this sad world; and in an almost countless number of allusions, the author declares his affection for "Smiffle." At an early period of life the boy was an orphan, his father leaving him, at his death, a handsome provision. On quitting school, he went to Cambridge, where his brief academic career terminated without his obtaining a degree. On coming of age, he obtained possession of his patrimony, amounting to not less than £20,000; but of this ample fortune, partly by his own youthful imprudences, and principally by the rascality of those whom he trusted, he lost every penny by the time he had completed his twenty-third year. A cruel commencement this to life, and calculated utterly to undo any but a very good or a very insignificant nature!

His early ambition, like Clive's, was to be an artist; and for some time he studied with industry at Rome and in the best Continental schools. But after giving it a fair trial, he relinquished the use of the brush and the pencil as a means of livelihood, and with a bold heart flung himself upon literature. For many years he found it a thankless vocation, crowded with successful blockheads, and disfigured by neglected merit. He went on the "Times" when Barnes was its editor; and he did well and uprightly his work as "a gentleman of the press." But it was in

“Fraser’s Magazine” and “Punch,” that he gained first the plaudits of his profession, and then of the public.

In 1841, “The Hoggarty Diamond” was published in “Fraser,” after having been declined by a magazine to which it had been offered. Even in that excellent and widely-circulated serial it attracted but little attention; a few readers, indeed, detected in “Mr. Titmarsh” a writer of no common power; and one of them, the amiable John Sterling, to whose name Carlyle’s pen has secured a long immunity from oblivion, was so struck with its excellence, that he prophesied the future celebrity of its author. But “Mr. Titmarsh’s” toil was not destined to meet with a quick return of praise; it was ordained that he was to experience, with what patience he could muster, the contumely of neglect, and for long years to work uncheered by the applause he merited, and unsustained by the more substantial rewards his genius and industry were entitled to, while he saw *the worth* of luckier aspirants acknowledged without delay, and—harder yet, the *worthlessness* of paper-blotting buffoons bearing away the bell. To us, at this day, contemplating that gem of art, “The Hoggarty Diamond,” its redundant wealth of humour, its simple pathos, and its thousand quaint beauties of fancy and expression, it is almost incredible that fairly intelligent and polite people could be found to admire the trash of Theodore Hook’s stories, and to turn coldly away from the delicate satire and generous sentiment with which the grotesque adventures of the city clerk were narrated. Yet so it was; and the fact may well be, as it has already often been, fruitful in encouragement and instruction to young authors who are impatient of obscurity, and are maddened by the capricious coquetries of success.

The “Paris Sketch Book,” the “Irish Sketch Book,” the “Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo,” the “Second Funeral of Napoleon,” and “Chronicle of the Drum,” “The

Yellow Plush Papers," "The Fatal Boots," the offerings of "The Fat Contributor," "Jeames's Diary," "The Memoirs of Barry Lindon, Esq.," and the "Snob Papers," are only a portion of Thackeray's deeds in literature before he achieved celebrity, or even made himself a secure position in his profession. His fame, indeed, had been gradually extending beyond what may be termed literary circles; the author of "Jeames's Diary," and the "Snob Papers," was to a certain extent known and admired by the general public of readers; and those best educated to form an opinion on his genius were emphatic in their commendations of his numerous works. Yet so little confidence had publishers in his power, and so little were his capabilities understood by the trade, that positively a magazine declined to accept "Vanity Fair." Its rejection was a lucky thing for Thackeray; for he courageously determined to take on himself the publication of that remarkable novel in monthly parts, adorned with pictures of his own, or, as he expressed it, "Illuminated with the author's own candles," and by so doing he won a world-wide reputation, and placed himself beyond the peril of that indigence, from which, in the professions of art and literature, even transcendent genius is not always secure.

The success of "Vanity Fair" was so great, that there was little danger of another work from the same pen being returned to the author's hands, with a curt note to the effect that, "Though a work of unquestionable power, it does not seem adapted for our publication." Little had the author to fear of a repetition of such a repulse; it was now the turn of "the trade" to dread that Mr. Titmarsh would be so good a man of business as to make in his next "arrangement" very small allowance to the publishers, he should honour with his patronage, for the cost of paper, printing, and commission. It has from time immemorial been the custom of the world to represent the publisher as

the extortionate oppressor of the needy author, making the necessities and *business* ignorance of men of genius the means of defrauding them. To repel this accusation and exclaim against its injustice we have no intention, for we are not members of the body attacked; and though we have every reason ourselves to speak in the warmest terms of the liberality and punctilious honour of the best class of London publishers, we do not feel it our duty or privilege to fight their battles. Yet we would make one suggestive inquiry. Granting that in the intercourse between publishers and authors, the former, when power is on their side, take care to reap all possible advantage from their superiority in position,—is the successful author, when the tables are turned, and he is of as much importance to the influential publisher as the publisher was to him in his days of unknown aspirancy, one whit less scrupulous? does he, as a rule, hesitate to drive as hard a bargain as possible with the man of business? We have been informed on authority that we cannot question, that successful writers whose works sell, and whose names are therefore necessary to the reputation of a great publishing house, are far harder masters to the gentlemen who get their works printed, advertised, and issued for them, than ever those same gentlemen are to the unknown authors, whose manuscripts they purchase at their own price.

“Vanity Fair,” has been followed by “Pendennis,” “Esmond,” the “Newcomes,” and the “Virginians,” now in progress. Besides these great works, Mr. Thackeray has put forth several Christmas books, such as “Dr. Birch,” “Our Street,” “The Kickleburys on the Rhine,” &c. &c., and has given his two famous series of Lectures on “The Humorists,” and “The Georges,” the former of which we have all read, as we shall probably ere long have a chance of reading the latter.

Such are the principal works of the great, and at this

moment in some circles, *favourite*, English novelist. To state exactly the influence they have had on society would be difficult, and we doubt not the arduous task of describing their immediate and secondary effects on our generation will occupy thinking men for many a long day. Perhaps to arrive at something like fair conclusions on this subject it will be best to consider—firstly the fictitious literature that immediately preceded the school which Thackeray has revived—in some particulars founded; secondly, the objects he has especially had in view as an author; thirdly, the general offence which his writings, on first becoming notorious, caused society; and lastly his present condition both as an artist, and in his individual relation to his fellow-citizens. To exhaust each of these four subjects for contemplation we shall not presume to attempt, but upon each in order we will hazard a few remarks, the agreeing with or dissenting from which may help the reader at least to—know his own mind.

The genius of Sir Walter Scott had given in fictitious literature great, perhaps undue, prominence to the historical novel, and during the first popularity of the Waverley novels, and for years after the publication of “Count Robert of Paris,” tales of history were the fictions surest of finding favour with the public. True it is, that Galt published his exquisite Scotch Stories, and was liberally rewarded by the patrons whose taste Sir Walter had already found, and that Miss Austin met with many readers for her truthful, earnest descriptions of English life, but their success was failure when compared with the encouragement given to far inferior writers, who prudently confined themselves to the delineation of moated castles, descriptions of crusades, or jaunty cavaliers, and the furbishing up of rusty armour. In due time public taste changed; the supporters of circulating libraries were wearied with the old properties and incidents of the Feudal and Civil War fictions; and representations of modern, extant, life came into fashion. Sir Walter Scott

lived to see the revolution. Then came the silver-fork, and the Rosa Matilda schools, of which Theodore Hook may be regarded as priest and king. What were their principal characteristics we need not describe; it is well to think as little as possible of those innumerable *genteel* romances, in which the miserable snobs who wrote them and the miserable snobs who read them scorned Bloomsbury and licked the shoes of May-fair. Such a mean and contemptible literature could not be otherwise than ephemeral. As people learned to understand and enjoy the poetry of Wordsworth, and the winning simplicity of Charles Lamb, they turned with a feeling of loathing from the vulgarities of the Minerva Press. There was a cry for a purer, a higher style of novel, in which the fair ideal of life might be embodied, and men might learn the great capabilities of our nature, and for awhile forget the bickerings and feuds of social contention. Even the frivolous and most foolish of what is termed the world of fashion were at length too well educated, too refined in taste, to be delighted with coarse descriptions of Russell square affectations, and the bad dinners of pretentious attorneys. "We must still have our novel, our fashionable novel," said the gentle denizens of May-fair, "but let it contain something better than kitchen gossip, let it still flatter our vanities and foster our prejudices—but with an adulation somewhat more delicate than that with which Jeames makes his overtures to Mary-Ann; let it at least learn the commonplaces of Fine Art, make a pretence to philosophic purpose and acumen, and offer an occasional sacrifice to that good taste whose altar is just now in fashion."

For those who wanted a novel of high and earnest purpose arose Charles Dickens, who clothed his philosophy with a varied and unexampled humour which gave delight to thousands, who were unable to profit by the solemn instruction which is imparted in all his books from "Pickwick" to

"Little Dorrit." The principal reformers of *the fashionable* novel with its worship of the *haut ton*, its disgust at the middle class, and its graceful commiseration for and patronage of the poor, were Bulwer, in the early part of his literary career, Disraeli, and many ladies of considerable genius, such as Mrs. Gore. Of these two schools of the new English novel, the former, instituted by Dickens, and oftentimes disgraced by his followers, and baser imitators (who, having acquired a few of their master's peculiarities of style, used them to promulgate their cockney vulgarities amongst shop lads and sempstresses) has a high claim upon our gratitude. Nor has the second been otherwise than very useful as a means of instruction and amusement to that numerous body of the educated, who can enjoy neither society nor literature in which "low" people and things occupy a prominent place. Sneer at it as we like in our moments of savage disdain for the respectable and the genteel, still the modern fashionable novels of Marlborough Street manufacture must be allowed a high place in our critical esteem. The *best* of them abound with vivid descriptions of what is most dazzling, perchance, also, most vicious in European capitals; with subtle delineations of character, the delicacy of which is often not surpassed in the conceptions of Shakspeare; and with complicated and astoundingly ingenious plots, epigrammatic wit, poetic language, and a wealth of scholarly allusion that proves their writers to be students of deep and varied research. And the *worst* of them are pleasant, lively narratives of love and folly, such as would have turned the fifteenth century mad with excitement. These books have refined the manners, if not the tastes, of the generation; and mainly to them it is to be attributed that a simple yeoman, who has passed his life on his paternal acres, is often found to possess the quiet self-possession, dignified bearing, and polished address, which, in the last century, were never attained to by men who had not profited by

foreign travel, and a prolonged residence in courts. Still, they have in some particulars exercised an unhealthy influence on our times, and have often poisoned natures originally genuine and chivalric. To sing the greatness of a great nation's aristocracy because their wines were purchased without regard to expense, and the best French dishes filled their dinner tables, was the kitchen adulation of rank which Hook encouraged; at this, as we have said, good taste revolted, and the writers of fashionable novels saw that the worship of the Peerage must be defended on other grounds than the merits of their cellars, and the splendour of their country houses. They hit on the admirable plan of urging the reasonableness of regarding the members of the world of rank as superior to the intelligent middle classes (i. e. mushroom wealth; the spawn of city wharves; upstart shop-keepers, &c. &c.) on account of their inherent greatness—their high morality and exalted talents. To support this audacious position, history was distorted or defied. When you have once made a theory it is not difficult to find evidence of its truth; and easy work the advocates of the new feudality theory found it to prove that no man of genius had ever lived who was not of noble descent. Complete success for a time followed the bold attempt, and “society,” was delighted with a system of reasoning which proved nine-tenths of the London *beau monde* to be utterly mean and contemptible, and congratulated themselves on “the claims of blood” now being put beyond question. People, who had been cured of their flunkeyism by the gross servility of Hook to his noble patrons, were charmed with this graceful apology for their tendency to degrade themselves before mere rank. It was no longer base and despicable and ridiculous to truckle to a lord; for wasn't a lord always a man of ancient descent (in Burke)? and did not history show that a man of ancient descent was necessarily wise and noble and venera-

ble? So powerful was the poison of this new doctrine for May-fair, that hundreds of young authors hastened to ridicule their own fathers in print, and really felt they were showing philosophic grandeur of intellect in making light of the arrogant presumption of the vulgar middle classes, and maintaining what they were pleased to call "the everlasting principles of race."

What *the leaders* of the new school of the fashionable novel especially had in view, was to give to their descriptions of aristocratic life that brilliance and richness of colouring which should be sufficient to beguile their readers from examining into the reality of the society presented to them. And well they succeeded. Though Bulwer is continually guilty of man-milliner affectations, and prates (as becomes an *almost well-descended* parvenu) about the physical expressions of race, and Disraeli hurries us through magnificent saloons, telling us the price of the pictures, the worth of ladies' jewels, and the rentals of ducal estates, in a tone befitting an Israelitish adventurer, still such is the effect they produce by their luxurious mansions, lovely women, sparkling conversations, daring intrigues, and decorous vice, that the reader's imagination is fascinated, and he pauses neither to question the truth of the description, nor to reflect how small a part self-denial, moral fortitude, and charity take in the drama. These books degraded careless people, in our great cities and secluded villages, into crawling worshippers of the titled and wealthy; they routed self-respect, threw contempt on humble toil and obscure honesty; more than any school of novels that we are acquainted with—French or German—they were emphatically vicious and vitiating. They transformed us from honourable men into sycophants and valets, and infused in the minds of wives and mothers and unmarried girls discontent, false notions of the good to be desired in life, and a host of the pettiest worldly ambitions. We were in a fair way to love

nothing but ourselves and the dear aristocracy. And this aristocracy of our affections existed nowhere but in our imagination; for Bulwer's school (and Dickens's also) never pretended to be composed of pre-Raphaelite artists. Their characters are as much ideals as they can be, and still represent actual life; the heroes and heroines are not the occupants of the clubs and drawing-rooms of the West-end, but imaginary persons composed of certain qualities of voice, form, mind, and attitude, to be found in real men and women of fashion; an entire human being is never depicted; most of the parts and capabilities of the creature are studiously kept in the background, and only a small number of them that will suit the picture are put on the canvass. Bulwer and Disraeli and Mrs Gore are truthful describers of life as far as they go, but they deceive by being one-sided—that is, not all-sided. Those who are in the habit of admiring the truthfulness of Dickens's descriptions will perhaps be astonished by being informed that he is as deceitful, deceiving, and wittingly dishonest a describer as can be found in the entire range of living authors. The triumph of his art is the perfection of his deceit; his purpose in whatever book, chapter, or scene he writes, is to call certain passions of our mind especially into action, and to effect this he brings into the foreground, and makes use of all those facts of life, the description of which will tend to arouse the required emotions; and all that would excite counter-acting feelings he carefully keeps out of sight. What he shows us is admirably drawn, often as exactly and as minutely as any pre-Raphaelite painter would use his brush, but still it is not the whole,—and the result is a deception, because we are induced by the consummate skill of the artist to regard the exaggerated and partial statement as all comprehensive and truthful in detail. His Peggotty is not a Yarmouth fisherman, but only certain features of his character put on the stage as a fisherman; of Dick Swiveller

we get only the mirthful and humorous side ; Clennam is nothing as the book goes but a good man,—that is less than the ninth part of one. Dickens's habit of minute description gains him a large credit for scrupulous honesty, and being above artistic legerdemain. A man so anxious to show even these little things cannot want to keep anything in the background, say simple readers, and so they fail to perceive that he is an artist who, while professing to appeal to their judgment, is making them the dupe of their passions.

When Thackeray first began to write, or rather to be known as a writer, there was a small but select portion of intelligent readers who longed for something more *truthful* in fiction. For both species of the popular novel—the fashionable one of Disraeli and Mrs. Gore, and the more catholic one of Dickens—they had a warm admiration ; they recognized their classic beauty and their power, and especially in the case of Mr. Dickens's school, their loftiness of sentiment and purpose ; they did not wish them to cease, or even to undergo mutation ; but they wanted a stern painter of nature to arise, who should not aim at touching their sensibilities by the tricks and sleights of authorship, but who, seeing Nature and knowing her intimately, should resolve to interest men by an exact and *complete* portrayal of separate human characters such as constitute this society in which we pass our days, loving and hating, sinning and repenting. They were impatient under the wonderful novelist who roused them with representations, which on cool examination they found to be one-sided pleadings. Irritated with a sense of having been trifled with, they exclaimed, "Let us have less art, and more truth ;" many of them not perceiving that more truth could not be obtained save through a higher art disdaining caricatures, and never stooping to artifice.

To satisfy this craving, in many minds to create it before

gratifying it, was Thackeray's appointed work. From first to last simplicity and accuracy, without reserve, have been his characteristics as an author. Wonderful it is how he has been misunderstood. For long he was regarded as one whose inspiration was entirely of the brain without any promptings of the heart; he was accused of being a cold-blooded cynic who could sneer at human sympathies, but whose passionless nature was incapable of arousing them. Yet no living author is so much the creature of powerful affections and tender sentiment. One gets a glimpse of his earnestness of purpose in seeing the completeness and unity of his manifold productions. How they none of them contradict each other, and how they abound with repetitions of generous opinions, and afford evidence how he takes views of life with deliberation, but never wearies of enforcing them. In the opinion of some, perhaps, these endless reappearances of his old scenes, and declamations, and sarcasms, may be proof of the feebleness of his inventive power; but we have always regarded them as signs of determination to fell down trees too great to be prostrated, save by reiterated blows. His hatred of swindlers, of gigantic arch-swindlers, (a class of men by the way he had in youth suffered under) burst out in the "Hoggarty Diamond," when his own misfortune was still young, and proclaimed itself again and again in his works between that tale and the "Newcomes," in which he gave the history of the Bundelcund Bank. We are still talking about his lectures of the Georges, and the respectable classes of Marylebone are still lamenting that Mr. Thackeray should have forgotten himself and good taste, so far as to speak so disrespectfully of royalty; but it was years ago, in the columns of *Punch*, he made honourable mention of George the Fourth as the snob Royal. Sometimes, perhaps, this habit of reiteration (as in the case of the duel at Paris in the "Yellow-plush Papers," and the duel in the "Newcomes" between Lord Kew and the Frenchman)

strikes one rather as the result of prudence similar to that which made Sterne cause his donkey to bear so many burdens; but why should we object to that in the novelist which we approve in the lecturer on morals?

Thackeray's one single aim in literature has been to speak to men in plain language on questions of vital interest to society; not to create a lovely picture such as we might wish the world to resemble, but to give a chart of this actual life, with all its loveliness and all its terrors—this life wherein the sun sets daily, the summer is followed by the winter, youth leads on to old age, and birth is a step to decay. The men and women he puts before us are none of them "ideals," they are the veritable beings who adorn or dishonour our nature. He is not insensible to the charms of those conceptions of uniform, unfaltering excellence in which Dickens delights; but he says "*it is not for me to imagine, I am to speak of men as I find.*" So he gives us good women; but the best of them are jealous where their affections are concerned, and when tempted, will peep through key-holes or tell fibs, and repent of their meanness as men never repent. He describes Amelia cherishing for long years the memory of a man whose selfish vain heart never deserved one pulse of her affection. The patient tenderness of the mother's love is contrasted with the selfishness of the child on whom it is lavished. His good men are not exempt from the personal disadvantages of awkward feet and clumsy features. If he is any where open to the charge of exaggerating certain features of his characters, and unwilling to give due prominence to others, it is when he is depicting the very bad. Barry Lindon, Esq. (the hero of the excellent "*Memoirs of Barry Lindon, Esq.*," a copy of Defoe, Fielding, and Smollett, far surpassing the originals), Bob Stubbs (that perfect specimen of the utterly mean in the "*Fatal Boots*") Becky Sharp, and Barnes Newcome may by some be instanced as caricatures of extreme villains,

without any trace of redeeming virtue. But do we not in the world find that the vicious are much more consistent than the virtuous? That while there are none so good that they never sin, there are some so bad that they never by any accident fall for one single instant into the ways of holiness? This may be a sad view of life, but life has its sad features, which we do well to contemplate; it may be satire, but it is truth. What is satire save unpleasant truth? It is by his veracity that the satirist of all men stands.

When "Vanity Fair" had been generally read, the almost universal sentence at first was that the author had a painfully low estimate of human nature. Many who gave this judgment were at a loss when they were asked for their reasons for it. It was true that Thackeray had declared the world of fashion to be very vicious, that its men were too often selfish and sensual, its women too frequently frivolous and heartless; but in this he was not peculiar, for the dissipations and graceful godlessness of the upper ranks of society had long been the favourite subjects for novel readers and writers. Rawdon Crawleys, Lord Steynes, Becky Sharps, and contemptible dandified George Osbornes abound in the fictions of Bulwer, Disraeli, Trollope, and Gore, less forcibly drawn indeed, but intended by their creators to be full as wicked. Why then was censure poured on Thackeray for giving them as types of the society in which they moved, and which to some extent had created them? Suppose the representation to be unjust and libellous on humanity; still, why was the reproof bestowed on Thackeray alone, while his predecessors and companions in guilt were allowed to go scot free? The fact was society was uneasy, irritated, in a passion, and wanted to wreak its fury on the cause of its discomfort; and society never loses its temper unless a great moral purpose is to be served by it, and, as we all know, its most cruel acts of

vengeance are only the fit expressions of a righteous indignation. The ladies were mortified by not finding at least one perfectly *faultless* woman in "the fair;" just as they would feel displeasure at not receiving any other compliment to which long custom has given them a certain vague right! So they said "Ah; poor man, he does not believe in the existence of good women!" The members of fashionable society generally were hurt—not by Mr. Thackeray's telling them they were miserable sinners (for they like to be reminded of that fact, and have from time immemorial paid people to repeat the gratifying intelligence)—but what they could not bear was to be told that they were essentially vulgar, disreputable, snobbish sinners. How natural was it for them to revile the plain-spoken prophet, to call him a sour embittered cynic, unable to admire the great, unable to pity the weak. Here was the real cause of offence. The satirist was no respecter of persons; the tyranny and infamy of a nobleman were described as truthfully as the vulgar ignorance of a waiting-man or lodging-house-keeper. St. James's and St. Giles's were alike vulgar; oftentimes the admired members of the most exclusive clubs were men to whom, starred and gartered though they might be, no true gentleman would give the hand of friendship. Society will bear almost any insult from a man of talent except an attack on its good taste; but he who presumes to question its delicacy and refinement must be prepared for the consequences. Miserable cynic, was its retort—"What! we yellow!—your eye is jaundiced; you have given us a picture, not of humanity, but of your own heart—no wonder that selfishness is in the front, and scorn in the back-ground!" And yet the book of this hateful, cold, callous man abounded with pathetic appeals for the desolate and distressed, like the following: "Oh! be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving.

Think! what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire?"

But in art, Truth will prevail. Men read those much-abused yellow pamphlets that came out month after month; and strong men, men not given to emotion, least of all to religious excitement, laid them down with tearful eyes and full hearts; and they were not a few who prayed earnestly to the Almighty for mercy and help, and rose from their knees with a determination to be men of charity. Hitherto the novelists had made them exult in the splendid infamy and brilliant sin of the world. "Pelham" and "Henrietta Temple," had thrown such a halo of glory around debt and seductions and sinful desire, that few could read them without being ambitious of hell. It was Thackeray who tore from social depravity her twofold robe, one side of rags and one of spangled purple, and displayed her hateful proportions. So much for the demoralizing tendency of this writer! More need not be said of it, for the charge has long since been withdrawn by those who were foolish enough to advance it.

It was interesting to watch society as it slowly read its recantation of its first opinion of Thackeray, and magnanimously allowed that he was entitled to a high place in public esteem. "He was a gentleman 'by birth,'" was observed on all sides, and was remarked in newspapers by journalists who would have fired up if any one suggested that the *employés* of the press were not usually gentlemen. Then the fortune he inherited on coming of age was multiplied three and four times. "Had Mr. Thackeray not lost his noble patrimony," wrote Jeames, in one of the leading metropolitan papers, "still would there have been a mansion in the West End belonging to him, still, as now, would lines of coronetted carriages have crowded around

his portals on nights of reception; but only as a distinguished leader of the world of fashion would he have been known—not as the greatest of living novelists, the poet, and the philosopher.” We quote from memory, but most of our readers must have remembered passages as fulsome and ridiculous as the above in our public journals. Those who did not make their apologies for old neglect and abuse to the satirist, on the ground of not knowing that he was a gentleman “by birth,” justified their former severity and subsequent softening, by avowing that the author had altered very much, that “Pendennis” and “Esmond” gave indications of benevolence and true humanity not to be found in “Vanity Fair,” and that the creator of Colonel Newcome, was not the same man as he who placed old Sir Pitt Crawley and Miss Horrocks upon canvass; possibly the sun of prosperity had called into play a geniality of temper, which the cold chill of neglect and comparative penury had for a time repressed.

But it is needless to enumerate all the many amusing ways in which the world ate its words, and preserved its self-complacency. The recantation was made, and Mr. Thackeray is the favourite author of the day in the world of fashion. He is triumphant. There can be no doubt that just now he is regarded in some classes as having surpassed his great contemporary Charles Dickens. In our own minds also there is no doubt that ere long those admirers will reverse their decision, and will again return to their old allegiance to “Boz.” We do not like to compare two such men as Thackeray and Dickens; but the remarks we have already made necessitate our doing so. For the genius of Charles Dickens, so varied, of such boundless resource, and so rich in almost every great poetic quality; we have a far higher esteem than we have for Thackeray’s; as artists they are totally opposed, save that a warm heart animates every line they pen; the one

has never drawn a character that is not an ideal ; the other cautiously avoids crossing the limits of the actual. If Dickens had a bad heart, and his moral aim as a writer was just the reverse of what it is, his humour and imaginative powers would still secure him the high rank he holds in our literature. But Thackeray's success is almost solely owing to his moral influence. Much as we respect his intellectual powers, we have a far higher admiration of his heart—that noble courageous generosity for which language has no word. He is emphatically the true gentleman of our generation, who has appealed to our best and most chivalric sympathies, and raising us from the slough and pollution of the Regency has made us once more “ a nation of gentlemen.”

Mr. Thackeray has acquired fame, and is generally understood to have secured wealth with it. We wish that of the life he has yet before him between this and the grave, he would devote a portion of the leisure he does not require for money-taking, to writing his biography, as faithfully and philosophically as he has written his novels. The world will want it when he is gone. It will be instructive to watch the world dealing with his reputation when he is no longer one of it. We believe that his memory standing up in the past, in colossal calm, will be the object of more love, than the applauding world will ever give him during his life.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLOTTE (BRONTË) NICHOLLS.

THE rudeness and barbarism of the more retired districts of the Northern counties are, at this day, such as South-countrymen, who have not visited them, find it difficult to imagine. In the manufacturing neighbourhoods of Yorkshire and Lancashire, the common people are characterised by obtuseness of feelings and sharpness of intellects; and their manners are the language of dogged ferocity and brutal insolence. During the present generation of railroads and social intercourse, they have perceptibly improved in morality, but their harshness of demeanour and savage instincts still remain. Thirty years ago, and even more recently, their wealthier gentry were devoted to pleasures and crimes, the bare mention of which makes us shudder; their nearest approach to love of art was a passion for "the ring" and "cock-fighting;" and their county magistrates, when they began to be weary of drunkenness, of oppressing their wretched tenants, and of the ordinary sensual indulgences, sought a novel excitement in deeds of lustful violence and murder.

In a part of Yorkshire where these pleasant practices remained in full vigour after they had disappeared in more favoured vicinities, stands Bradford. Nigh to Bradford is Keighley, and about four miles from Keighley is Haworth, the parish that now especially interests us. The neighbourhood is populous, and abounds with wealth; but its aspect is bleak and desolate, and it is the home of impoverished, lawless, improvident, and rebellious multitudes,

The lords of it are the wealthy manufacturers ;—the people are herds of wretched slaves who hold their destitution and bondage up to contempt by prating of their rights and privileges as freemen. The parish itself contains some two thousand eight hundred persons, who alternately starve and toil in the production of our national greatness. The village is composed of houses built of grey stone, ample and durable, but devoid of architectural graces or adornment of any kind. No flower gardens are to be seen, partly because the climate is hostile to them, principally because the inhabitants have neither leisure nor desire to cultivate the beautiful. Around are tracts of moor-land, on which the snow lies almost till midsummer, and over which the cold, biting winds sweep, plaining miserably, and unbroken by a single tree. Damp and ill-drained, this hamlet is frightfully unhealthy ; in certain seasons it is scarcely better than a pest-house ; every spring typhus rages in it, and the ill-fated population, unprovided with medicines, fuel, food, and wine, necessary to make head against the terrible disease, is decimated.

One of the chief residences is the parson's house, an oblong erection of stone, containing about eight rooms ; it stands alone, hard and graceless, unprotected by a single tree, surrounded on three sides by a foul grave-yard, its front looking out on an ugly-looking little church, its back abutting on the moors. The massive tenement has one, and only one, recommendation—it is strong enough to bear the winds that unceasingly beat against it, and the torrents of rain that almost without cessation pour upon it during nine months of the year.

To this parsonage came, in the February of 1820, “a new parson.” He was a tall, fine man, over forty years of age, having been born in 1777 ; and he was accompanied by a dying wife, and six little children. The man had a character—but not in all respects an agreeable one.

He was one of nature's aristocracy whom fortune had not smiled on, and whom foiled ambition had soured. The son of an Irish cottier (or small peasant farmer) he had early applied himself to the task of self-education, and from sixteen to twenty-four years of age, maintained himself as a village-schoolmaster; had then gone into a private gentleman's family, as a tutor, and thence, by the aid of a sizarship at St. John's College, had worked on to a B.A. degree at Cambridge, and holy orders. He had cherished literary aspirations destined to be disappointed; and now he found himself with a poor dying wife (a gentle creature, the daughter of a Cornish tradesman)—six wee brats, and scarce any means, save the income derived from the small incumbency to which he had been appointed—the perpetual curacy of Haworth, valued in the "Clergy List" at £170 per annum.

He found his parish a hot-bed of dissent, and distracted with sectarian contentions; but he found a way of rendering himself agreeable to all parties, and became, in a certain way, popular. "What kind of a clergyman have you?" one of his parishioners was once asked. "A rare good one," was the reply; "he minds his own business, and ne'er troubles himself with ours." He was neither a bad man, nor naturally an unamiable man; but bodily suffering and unkind circumstances had reduced him to a state of gloomy egotism—usually called misanthropy. He lived much apart from his family; had his meals alone; and though he associated in some sort with his children, he would not stoop to them, but made them strain up to him; he did not play with them, and tell them fairy stories, but they, ere they could well lisp, were in the habit of hearing him read the parliamentary debates, and discoursing with him on the characters of statesmen and the principles that ought to regulate taxation. His digestion was bad, and he was in consequence full of sombre crotchets and humours.

He schooled himself into believing that disappointment was the lot of man, and he found a fanatic's elysium in contemplating his creed. On the education of children he was an advocate of all the visionary egotistic nonsense of Rousseau; and in the manner in which he trained his offspring, he followed in the steps of Mr. Edgeworth and Mr. Day. He allowed them only a vegetable diet, and nothing but potatoes; and so that the love of dress should not be fostered in their innocent breasts, he burnt up all their little coloured shoes. He was not less decided on the simplicity he liked in female attire, for *the one silk dress* his poor wife had—never wearing it because it annoyed her husband, but treasuring it in a secret-drawer—he contrived to get hold of, and rip into strips. He had a violent temper, and struggled against it manfully; but the demon demanded some vent for its savage force, and he was in the habit of relieving himself by firing off pistols in rapid succession into the air, or sawing the backs from chairs, and so reducing them to the condition of stools; and on one occasion, he found peace for his troubled spirit by stuffing his hearth-rug into the fire, and sitting over it till its last thread was destroyed—enjoying the smoke and stench. He walked prodigiously, and was always armed with a loaded pistol. “Ought I not to be thankful,” his amiable wife used to say, “that he never gave me an angry word?”

Mrs. Brontë died in September, 1821, leaving behind her six children—Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Patrick Branwell, Emily Jane, and Anne. Charlotte was born on the 21st of April, 1816. After the decease of their mother the children led even a more quiet, and monotonous, and sombre life than before. None of the sunny treats and bright revels of childhood fell to their lot; their father's poverty cut them off from expensive indulgences, and his whims deprived them of many of those little pleasures which even the indigent can procure. Thinly clad, poorly

fed, and exposed to an impure atmosphere and the rude winds of the moor, they were nipped and wretched enough; and grew up, with the exception of Branwell, stunted, cadaverous, and sickly. From their mother, whose fatal malady was cancer, they inherited weakly constitutions; from their father they derived nerves morbidly sensitive, and they were reared, amidst the vapours of foul drains and a crowded burial ground, on nutriment little calculated to give substance to their thin blood. Intellectually, they were painfully precocious; it makes one shudder to think how knowing and weird they were. They never had a nursery, and never wanted one; nor had they a play-room, but they possessed a little apartment that was christened the "children's study." Maria was only seven years old when she used to shut herself up for hours with the newspaper, and read it straight through—debates in parliament, law reports—everything! One day the queer notion seized their father of making them each answer, through a mask, a question put to them by him. Maria, ten years old, was asked what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, "By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity." To Elizabeth, the question put was, what was the best mode of educating a woman, and she replied:—"That which would make her rule her house well." Charlotte was requested to name the best book in the world. She selected first, the "Bible" and then "the Book of Nature." Branwell was asked the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects of men and women. His practical response was, "By considering the difference between them as to their bodies." Of Emily, it was inquired how her brother Branwell ought to be treated, if naughty; "reason with him," she replied; "and when he wont listen to reason, whip him." Anne, the youngest—a four-year old child—was asked "what a child like her most wanted; "age and experience," was the

answer from the infant-philosopher's lips! Think of such a word as "experience" coming from such a babe's tongue! It is positively shocking! The only one of the answers at all natural was Emily's.

On the death of Mrs. Brontë, one of her sister's came to Haworth parsonage, and took the headship of her brother-in-law's family. She was a maiden lady, and had the modest independence of an annuity of £50. She was a crotchety but worthy creature; did her best in a homely fashion to instruct her little nieces, and, when she died, left them a few pounds she had saved out of her limited income.

And now an important step was taken by this humble family. Through the energetic benevolence of the Reverend William Carus Wilson, a wealthy beneficed clergyman of the county, a school for the education of the daughters of poor clergymen, was established at Cowan's Bridge, a small hamlet on the coach-road between Leeds and Kendal. The institution was only in part a charitable one, for a sum of about £15 per annum was paid by each pupil, and for that small amount a fair education was obtainable. To this place it was arranged that the little Brontës should be sent. Accordingly, Maria and Elizabeth entered the seminary in the July of 1824, and Charlotte and Emily followed them in the ensuing September. About this establishment there has been much painful discussion, to which the writer of these pages would be sorry to add any additional bitterness. It was a new institution, and of considerable magnitude,—difficulties and hitches were consequently to be expected in its working. It originated in a Christian desire to promote the welfare of humanity; but benevolent people are often great fools. Here, we think, are to be found the explanation and apology of and for the Cowan Bridge miscarriages. The dietary of the pupils was properly a very

simple one, and *on paper* it was such as was fit for the children of indigent parsons; but the servants were badly selected and their criminal carelessness resulted in the girls being systematically fed on unwholesome food. The porridge was usually burnt so as to be nauseous in the extreme, the rice was boiled in dirty rain-water, taken out of a rotten tub; the milk was more than sour, it was "bingy;" offensive dirt was found in the pies, and the meat was often put on the table in a state of putridity. Perhaps the colouring of this picture will not be heightened by adding that this fare was served out in very spare rations. If things in the kitchen and refectory were bad, in the school-room and the dormitories they were worse. The principal was a gentle, high-minded, and most noble woman, but the subordinate teachers were inferior, underpaid drudges; one of them was an utter fiend. A severe, and even barbarous discipline, was a part of "the system." In most cases the neglect of the domestic servants, and the tyranny of a brutal instructress, would in such an institution be made known to the authorities, and the evils be forthwith corrected. But Mr. Wilson, who was the ruler of the school, was an arrogant, self-righteous, pompous, and dictatorial man, to whom no one dared to make a complaint. Any whisper of dissatisfaction with the Cowan's Bridge arrangements he regarded and resented as an expression of personal ill-will to himself. A benevolent man, he was often obstinate and vindictive, and invariably tyrannical. He lectured the children on their vile natures, their mean condition of poverty, the dead certainty that after this life they would go to hell. He meant well, and by his unfeeling harangues desired only to reduce them to a state of desirable spiritual humility; but he roused in their breasts fierce and vindictive passions—pride, defiance, hate. And he did not undo his evil work by cropping their hair close to their heads, and making them look what he was everlastingly tell-

ing them they were—no better than workhouse children. Perhaps there were in the school some girls with heavy natures and dull sensibilities, who did not smart and writhe under the solemn tyranny of this gentleman; but many are his former victims, who at this day forgive him, only because he is in the grave.

To add to the list of untoward circumstances connected with the college, its situation was unhealthy. The noxious atmosphere did its work on the girls, already reduced by bodily privations and insults. The fever broke out in the spring of 1825, and the children fell ill by the dozen. Mr. Wilson took fright, and called in a sensible and humane surgeon (his own brother-in-law), who was bold enough to taste some of the daily food of the girls, and forcibly expressed his opinion of it by spewing it from his mouth. At this crisis, Maria Brontë sickened of pulmonary disease, and was removed to Haworth, where she died a few days after her return. It was this poor child who was the original of Helen Burns in "Jane Eyre." Elizabeth next drooped, and in the summer following her sister's death, she too died of consumption at Haworth.

Charlotte and Emily returned after the Midsummer holidays to Cowan's Bridge. Their father was not a man to give up a plan; he was slow to perceive what "a hell" the school professedly conducted according to his own pet views, with Spartan severity and simplicity, was. Perhaps, too, he was not anxious to exhibit hastiness in removing his daughters from an institution founded by so influential a person as Mr. Wilson. But though Emily and Charlotte had returned to Dotheboys Hall, they quitted it for good ere the Christmas of that fatal year, with embittered dispositions and permanently injured constitutions.

The four children were now for some years educated at home. Their aunt instructed them in some of the branches of an English education, and they picked up a smattering

of French from their father; but their mental growth was chiefly promoted by the miscellaneous reading of newspapers, magazines, and their father's small stock of books, and by continually exercising themselves in literary compositions. They conducted for their own peculiar amusement little magazines on the model of "Blackwood;" the articles in which were all original, being spun from their active brains. To give some idea of Charlotte's industry in authorship, it may be stated that in fifteen months, ere she was fifteen years of age, she wrote twenty-two closely penned volumes of poetry, tales, and essays. Each volume contained from sixty to a hundred pages, and each page, microscopically indited, contained at least twice as much as an ordinary page of a three-volume novel.

But time passed on, and it seemed fit that some steps should be taken for providing the girls with such accomplishments as would enable them to earn their living as governesses. Charlotte was accordingly sent to a small and modest school in the vicinity in the January of 1831. She was shy and awkward, very tiny, short-sighted, and ignorant of those rudiments of knowledge that nearly all children are acquainted with; albeit, she possessed a stock of information about books and politics that even women of the world might have envied her for. Her thirst for knowledge was great, and she gave herself with such energy to learning, that she acquired much in a year and a half. In 1832 she returned home "a finished young lady." Of course the desultory and meagre education she had received fitted her for only the humblest position as a governess. French was the only language save that of her mother tongue, that she knew anything of, and her acquaintance with it was little more than a smattering. She could neither sing, nor play on the piano; and her appearance and manner were so inferior and countrified, and her ignorance of the tone and etiquette of society was so complete, that she was

altogether incapable of instructing and rightly influencing young ladies entering on womanhood.

But it was necessary for her to do what she could. Any how she could be a nursery governess. Her poor father could not afford to keep her at home, and at the same time educate her sisters. So she went forth in the world to earn her living as a teacher of the humblest grade. In the July of 1835 she became an instructress in the school kept by Miss Wooller, where she had herself been taught. Emily accompanied her as a pupil, but her health not bearing the restrictions of scholastic discipline, she returned to Haworth. Of course Charlotte earned but little here; but perhaps more than her sister Emily, who on recovering her health went into a school at Halifax as a drudge. In due course she tried private families, and found the lot of servitude a hard one. She could command only a salary of from £16 to £20 per annum, from which washing expenses had to be deducted, and the hours not employed in teaching unruly children to spell, she was expected to devote to mending their clothes, and the general needle-work of the household. One of her mistresses was in the habit of rating and bullying her as no decent farmer's wife would rate a scullion. When she walked out with her pupils and her master joined them, he requested her to walk at a distance behind, while he sauntered on with his children. He was a kindly intentioned man, and did not mean to hurt her feelings, but he regarded her only as a nursery-maid. It was very hard. Although, she was very poor, had from her infancy fared like the child of a peasant, and had been clad in humble raiment, she still had cherished in her breast that she, the daughter of a man of education and a clergyman, was *a lady*. And she found herself regarded only as a menial! But for the credit of human nature, it must be stated that in her experiences as a governess she met with much kind treatment and delicate consideration, although

one of her mistresses scolded her little boy for being so vulgar as to say that he "loved the governess."

Her sister had experiences as hard as hers. She had even less physical hardihood, and even fewer educational advantages. Emily was a remarkable creature. As a child and as a woman, she was in person a mere shadow of humanity,—pale, and delicate. But a wild unearthly spirit dwelt within her, and ever and again it flashed forth through her eyes in a fashion that made beholders tremble. When a child she was bitten by a strange dog, and without saying a word she went to the kitchen, took a red-hot Italian iron from the fire, and laid it on the wounded part. Her pet and constant associate was a huge, tawny, ferocious bull-dog, that some eccentric friend had given her. Every one in the house stood in awe of this brute; it persisted in lying at full length on the clean counterpanes of the beds, but no one save its mistress dared teach it better manners, for it was known never to forgive a blow. Emily, however, resolved to flog the monster. She was small, slight, feeble, and a child in years; but with whitened face, and flashing eyes, she seized the dog by the back of the neck and dragged it down stairs; on reaching the hall, she let go her hold, and instantly the furious creature flew at her throat, but promptly, with her little clenched fist, she struck it in the eye and knocked it back; a quick succession of blows followed—every one of them being directed against the one or the other eye. The battery lasted for several minutes, when the animal fell down stupefied, blinded, and senseless; and Emily dragged off its huge carcase in triumph, to foment the swollen eyes. The dog loved her, with a dog's lasting, slavish love, ever afterwards lived obedient to her call, and when she died mourned as weakly as a human creature over her grave.

She could grapple with and conquer an infuriated bull-

dog; but in the longer battle of life she fell—beaten. She could not stand the slavery of governessing like Charlotte and Anne; the unkindness of the world crushed her; the home at Haworth, with its noisome drains and wet cold moors, was the only nest she could support existence in,—and even there her unquiet spirit fretted her frail body into the tomb.

There is another member of this family of whom we must say a few words—the boy Patrick Branwell Brontë. His case was even more pitiable than his sisters. He was a handsome lad, although he had red hair; he had good intellectual powers, but he was allowed to grow up without any regular training. His father nominally educated him, but he was left to himself, with the exception of an hour or two in the day, which he occupied in acquiring under Mr. Brontë's tuition a slight stock of classical and mathematical knowledge. His companions he was allowed to choose amongst the idle lads of the village; his amusements he might find any where, so long as he did not trouble others about them. With a ready wit, a strong love of the humorous, and a high courage, he lived on good terms with all, of all classes, far and near; his jokes were repeated in every beer shop in the neighbourhood, and his praises were on the lips of all the factory girls. He was something of a poet, and wrote to Wordsworth for advice about publishing his verses. He had a turn for art, painting in a rough, unrefined style speaking likenesses of all his friends; and his conversational powers were brilliant and fascinating. He was a village genius—in other words, a village debauchee. The commercial travellers who visited Haworth always had him up to the Black Bull, and paid him in wine and spirits for his jests and songs. He was by no means devoid of ambition, and longed ardently to escape from the obscure place in which he had spent his life; and so attentively had he studied the map of London,

the city of marvels which he hoped one day to see, that he knew every short cut, and alley, and by-way in it. He believed that if he had an opportunity given him, he should rise in the world; his sisters made up their mind that he was to rise without it. He was the being on whom they fixed their romantic hopes. He would emerge, they fancied in their sanguine simplicity, from the grime and fog of Haworth; would become an illustrious man; and, sitting in the rays of his splendour, they would be numbered amongst the ladies of the land. What a dazzling dream! Unacquainted with the world, they never paused to consider the steps by which men rise in it; or, to ask how their brother, without a £100 to pay the first fees in any regular career of education, and without any solid stock of learning, was to be "a great man." They knew not how plentiful clever men are, and how hard a work they find it "to get on," even when backed by wealth, and supported by powerful friends. Nothing had been done *for* him, yet, with amiable selfishness, they expected everything *from* him. The land that had been badly tilled, and never sown with anything but tares, was ordered to produce a full crop of wheat. Perhaps they reasoned that their papa had forced his way from the ranks of the Irish peasantry into the ministry of the Established Church; and that, therefore, his son could make good his place on the Bench of Bishops. But thirty years ago it was an easier thing to "rise;" competition was not so great, and candidates were both fewer, and of poorer quality; ambitious clerks and shop-lads, with a very slender stock of brains and knowledge, could get themselves ordained or admitted into the medical profession, who would now find it impossible to slip away from the desk or the counter. Most probably, however, the sisters never tried to look at the question practically; like all people labouring under gloomy circumstances they were fond of

hoping, and in this day-dream they indulged in the most intoxicating of all hopes! The vision was all the fairer because it did not rest on them to realize it; and when at length their airy castles dissolved into the thin element from which they were created, their disappointment was cruel, and unreasonably, but not unnaturally, they felt that their poor broken brother had *wronged them*. They could not *forgive* him for their own folly. They lacked sufficient sisterly dignity and womanly generosity to endeavour to disguise his failings. Instead of covering his nakedness, they exhibited his moral deformities to others. Charlotte to her two young-lady friends was perpetually alluding to Branwell's vicious excesses, and one of her sisters held them up to public contempt and loathing in a work of fiction. Mrs. Gaskell, in her excellent biography of Charlotte, seems to have overlooked this view of the case: but, as a woman, she doubtless entertained a strong sympathy with the girls, and thought lightly of the trials and temptations of the wretched man.

There was talk ending in nothing about sending Branwell up to London to study art; then another plan was suggested, and then another. At length, without being *started* at all he *broke* away from home. Of course the lax principles and vicious tastes he had contracted in the country, were not eradicated in London, where sin has many attractions it possesses not elsewhere, and sensual indulgence by no means necessitates loss of reputation. For a time he was a tutor in a gentleman's family, and managed to make a favourable impression on the affections of his pupil's mother. A *liaison* of some sort or other was the consequence, and led to the expulsion of the young *roué* from his master's house. Mrs. Gaskell is very severe on this "erring sister's shame," and would fain imply that she seduced her lover: but on Mrs. Gaskell's own shewing, the notion of *corrupting* a Branwell Brontë is ridiculous.

After a time the lady's husband died, and she did *not* marry her discarded tutor and admirer; and Mrs. Gaskell again condemns her—for abstaining from marrying the man who had brought disgrace on the names of her dead husband, herself, and her children. Is a woman not to be allowed to repent, ere repentance is too late? Because when a wife she forms an immoral connection with a libertine, is she bound by the laws of morality to go on in sin, and pollute herself still farther by taking him again to her arms on becoming a widow?

From grade to grade Branwell Brontë fell in vice. Intemperance grew upon him, and he became an extreme example of sottishness. Now and then he exerted himself, and tried to right himself; but there was no cheering prospect before him to allure him into purer manners; he returned to Haworth to die by slow stages of all the maladies that habitual intoxication and debauchery give rise to in the young—fits, *delirium tremens*, and profound melancholy. In his last years he tried to lull conscience to sleep by consuming opium.

Disappointment, from sources distinct from their brother, came to the poor girls. They failed to better their condition by slaving as inferior governesses; and they did not meet with encouragement in some literary essays they made. In 1837, Charlotte wrote to Southey, and sending him some poetry, asked his opinion upon it. The laureate replied to her with characteristic kindness, dissuading her from the cultivation of her poetic faculty as a means of livelihood, and with exquisite delicacy urging her to look for happiness in the performance of those domestic duties, that in some form or other devolve on all women. In 1840, she wrote the commencement of a story, on a Richardsonian scale, and sent it to Wordsworth, who advised her to relinquish its continuance. It seemed that neither teaching nor authorship would do much for them.

They, however, wished to make another attempt to gain a livelihood. If their aunt would give two of them the means of going for awhile as pupils into a school in France, or Belgium, they might acquire foreign languages. Then, if their aunt (to no one else could they look for a £10 note) would advance them a little capital, say £100 or £200, they might establish themselves in a house, and open a school of their own. This scheme was acted upon, and in the February of 1842, Charlotte and Emily (without the "bull-dog") entered a pensionnat at Brussels, containing from eighty to a hundred pupils. In September, they returned to Haworth, their aunt being dead. The old lady had left, by will, her little savings to her *nieces*, bequeathing nothing to her ne'er-do-weel nephew. After the year 1843 had fairly set in, Charlotte returned alone to Brussels, as a teacher in the pensionnat where she had been a pupil. Her salary was £16 per annum, out of which she had to pay ten francs a-month for German lessons. She was called *Mademoiselle* Charlotte, and was treated "as such;" the unruly Belgian girls, who regarded her spare figure, awkward dress, and ugly little face with contempt and ridicule, being little inclined to respect her. She remained in this situation till the end of 1843, and on the second of January, 1844, once more arrived at Haworth.

It was now arranged that they would take pupils at the parsonage. Cards were printed, advertising the fact that they would board and instruct young ladies for the small sum of £35 per annum for each pupil. These cartels were distributed in various quarters, and they did their best to get pupils—but none came. They were little known. Again their praiseworthy endeavours were to be disappointed.

Seeing that their scholastic enterprizes did not promise well, they once more turned their hopes to literature. In

1846, they published a joint volume of poems, assuming the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. The risk was all or partly theirs, for out of their aunt's legacies they paid Messrs. Aylott and Jones, of Paternoster Row, £31 10s. for having the book printed and issued to the trade. But this arrangement they did not make till their little volume had been rejected by several publishing houses. On the whole this venture brought them little profit, for though the poems were on the whole pretty well received by the critics, they did not find many purchasers.

While the poems were being printed, the three sisters set to work, each writing a tale. The name of Charlotte's, was "The Professor;" her sisters' stories were "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey." The two latter were accepted, after many refusals, by a publisher, but it would seem brought their authors little, if any, emolument. But Charlotte had the deep mortification of not being able to find a publisher for "The Professor." The last house that refused it was that of "Smith and Elder," but their rejection was accompanied by an encouragement to the author to try again. The persevering, undaunted woman was already trying again. In August of 1846, she accompanied her father to Manchester, where he went to be operated on for cataract. On the very day that he submitted to the operation, she had "The Professor" sent back to her by some publisher, with a rough curt note,—and on that very day she set to work on the commencement of "Jane Eyre." It was leisurely written—first roughly, and then copied out fair. When it was finished it was sent to Messrs. Smith and Elder, who published it on October 16th, 1847, about two months before "Wuthering Heights," and "Agnes Grey" lagged into the light.

In the June of 1848, Anne Brontë's second tale "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall," was given into the publisher's hands.

In the October of 1849, was published Charlotte's second story "Shirley."

In the beginning of 1853, "Villette" was published.

And since her death has appeared her first novel "The Professor;" and though it has been read widely and with interest as an early essay of a celebrated writer, the general opinion of it has endorsed the sentence of the publishers' readers who saw it in succession, and declined it.

It is not necessary to examine all these remarkable stories in detail. They all have so strong a family likeness that the public were for some time of opinion that Currer, Ellis, and Acton, were not three Bells—but one Bell. Of them all, "Jane Eyre" is the best and most extraordinary. It has faults of hardness—perhaps coarseness—from which the later of Currer Bell's books are almost free, but it has a force and strength that neither "Shirley" nor "Villette" possess. At the outstart it was coldly received; the critics who first noticed it being either timid, or careless. But it seized the heart of the public, and it has been praised and abused more lavishly than any book of modern times. Knowing, as we now do, its author's experiences, we can see that it is a woman's book; but Currer Bell's life had been so masculine—spent in such rude ungentle scenes, with so much fierce contention, and stern trial—that her work seemed the book of a man. Women often write well what they feel acutely; but without quick, stirring, vehement sensations, they are usually very feeble authors. Acrimony and sorrow inspire them to more purpose than joy and gentleness. They are most powerful in the narration of their sufferings. Our most stirring female writers are those who have been driven to the pen by ill-usage—the tyranny of husbands, the persecutions of the world, and domestic wrongs. Charlotte Brontë is an instance in support of this general rule. Her tale was no trifle of the imagination, nor was it a bit of fanciful picture-painting according to the traditional laws

of fashionable novels ; it was her own heart-story—her view of the stern world in which God had put her to toil and hunger and suffer insult. She had had for men-associates a misanthropical father, a drunkard brother, a few ill-taught Yorkshire curates who had made love to her promptly rather than delicately. She had herself tasted the misery and cruelty that childhood may be subjected to in the name of Christian charity. Apart from her sisters and a few schoolmates, her acquaintance with English-women was almost entirely confined to the wives of wealthy tradesmen, who had regarded her as an upper servant, and sometimes treated her sharply, as though she were an idle and worthless one. Her knowledge of the world was derived from books, and traditions of the crimes and deeds of lust that blackened the annals of her barbarous province. Her career had been far otherwise than feminine, and so was her book. To use a homely phrase, “she spoke as she found.” As the excellences of “Jane Eyre” arose from this cause, so did its chief errors and defects. She was faultless when describing Lowood—or any other scene that she herself knew ; but when she stepped out of the confined circle of her experience she often erred by applying sentiments she had *really* heard uttered, and conduct she had *really* witnessed, to individuals in a class she knew nothing about. For instance, no English ladies of breeding in the presence of men ever insulted a poor governess, as she represents Jane Eyre to have been insulted by women of aristocratic rank in Mr. Rochester’s drawing-room, at Thornfield ; yet such a scene would have been perfectly in place in the best parlour of an uneducated Yorkshire spinner. In the same way she acquired from her companions a coarse, as well as a vigorous vocabulary. She thought of things not positively unchaste—but such as no delicate woman nurtured in refined society would like to acknowledge she had considered. Much of “Jane

Eyre" is mere Pamela for the nineteenth century. What man would like to hear his sister describe an incident during a morning drive in an open carriage in the following terms:—"I ventured once more to meet my lover's eye, which most pertinaciously sought mine, though I averted both face and gaze. He smiled; and I thought his smile was such as a Sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched: *I crushed his hand, which was ever hunting mine, vigorously and thrust it back to him, red with the passionate pressure?*" But with all its defects, though the incidents are many of them improbable—(for what gentleman would think of keeping an insane wife, in such a hell-cat state of madness, in an upper chamber of his country residence, when he especially needed privacy with regard to his misfortune, and private asylums abounded in the neighbourhood of London?) and though all the interest is wiped out of the hero by a stroke of blindness (as is not the case with Romney Leigh) it is beyond comparison the best modern novel that has proceeded from the pen of a female writer.

She was thirty-one years of age when "Jane Eyre" was published. At length fame and a certain degree of pecuniary prosperity were gained;—and then stepped in death to remove the entire family, with the exception of Mr. Brontë, just as brighter days seemed to have dawned upon them.

On September 24th, 1848, Patrick Branwell Brontë died, aged 30 years. Emily Brontë died, December 19th, 1848, aged 29 years. The fierceness of the girl, who when a child in age conquered an angry bull-dog, displayed itself in her dying illness. Her malady was a lingering consumption, attended with acute pain; but she refused to see any physicians—no poisoning doctors should come near her—and she would not allow any person to help her or nurse her, and she insisted on rising and attempting with the

death-rattle in her throat to sew, on the very morning before her dissolution, which took place at two o'clock in the afternoon. Anne Brontë died on the 28th of May, 1849, and Charlotte Brontë died on the 31st of March, 1855, in the 39th year of her age, a few months after her marriage to her father's curate—the Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, A.B.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLES DICKENS.

THAT the biographies even of obscure persons are interesting, and that the biographies of great men are instructive, are two somewhat trite propositions we are all of us ready to maintain, and never more zealously than when in the memoirs of illustrious individuals we seek the means of gratifying a love of petty scandal and mean detraction. The histories of men distinguished for genius contain a large part of the history of the human race, and are the key by which alone we can understand that portion of history that lies apart from them. A hero's acts, a legislator's decrees, a philosopher's reasonings, a painter's pictures, a poet's imaginings are the true memorial and likeness of *his* mind; but if we want to know how far they express the sentiment of his *epoch* we must turn to his written life. Illustrated by such a record they proclaim both the genius of the man and of his time. It is common to hear it stated that the mental power that distinguishes the leader from the herd is the product of surrounding circumstances, and is the representative of intellectual vigour and tastes common to the multitude. But it is possible for a thinker to be no reflection of his generation, to be altogether before his day, and to know literally and in the sternness of truth how bitter a thing it is to live alone. The classical condition and polite arts of the cloisters in the dark ages, however they aroused the wonderment of the stupid, were no picture of the ignorance and violence that ruled everywhere save within the walls of religious houses. Before the diffusion

of letters, of course the distinction between the teacher and the taught was wider than it is now ; but even in times or classes of some intellectual culture and refinement, we find the great artist neglected and the paltry imitator applauded, the poet despised and the jester caressed. By the "Paradise Lost" we are enabled to form some conception—weak and inadequate, indeed, but still not otherwise faulty—of the colossal dignity of Milton's genius, in the same manner that we learn from the songs and plays of the wits of the Restoration, the flippancy and obscenity of their ape-like minds. But if we want to arrive at the tastes and sympathies and ambitions—the heart and inmost life—of that memorable period, we must turn from the works of these men, and inquire what treatment they received at the hands of society?—by whom they were protected and by whom opposed?—with whom they dwelt, the wealthy and high-born, or the obscure?—in what estimation they were held?—how they were honoured or dishonoured in their lives?—how consigned to the grave? And when we do so we find the high-souled poet merely obtained a decent interment, while the ashes of buffoons were deemed worthy of burial in the great Abbey amongst the noblest of England's departed sons ; and we learn that "Paradise Lost" was sold by its writer for a sum scarce sufficient to pay for the pens, ink, and paper consumed in its production, while an immoral poem could win "a place" and wealth at court, and an indecent comedy was rewarded with hundreds of gold pieces. This is the money test—the vulgar test—but it is well to use it when inquiring after the affections of the vulgar.

These reflections naturally arise when, after reviewing the novelists from the first rise of their art in England, we at length come to the greatest, the most successful, in every sense *the best* living writer of prose fiction. In the course of our long journey the *art* has passed through many phases,

and the *artist*, not less numerous changes in position, influence, character, and social esteem. The art is no longer a despised one; it is not devoted to the fabrication of indelicate and dangerous love-stories, capable only of amusing silly women, and tickling the sensuality of vicious men; and no longer is it given over to the guardianship of the meanest writers of sterile imaginations and gross instincts; but it takes under its cognizance every subject that interests the intelligence or arouses the affections of man. It has had a hard battle to fight, and is not yet without its enemies, but even its bitterest foes are indebted to it for happy hours and mental guidance. No one now can affect to disdain the novel as a light and pernicious form of literature fit only for the frivolous; for it treats with masterly strength and lucidity the most important topics. The wisest thinkers, the most laborious scholars, and the most adroit politicians combine to use it as the best means of appealing to the intelligence of their fellow-men. It is most catholic and engrossing, appealing to every variety of mental conformation, and attracting to itself authors of every school of thought, and style. No one is left unconsidered. Statesmen avail themselves of it to propound their theories on government, moralists to illustrate their opinions, churchmen and no-churchmen to bring into the field the forces of polemical contention, classical students to paint the deeds of fallen empires and the manners of peoples long since swept from the family of nations, and cities long since buried in the earth. The pedant can no longer growl at "the lightness" of "trashy fiction," for in the productions of novelists are works pedantic, and dull, and heavy enough to please the stupidest and most pompous Doctor of Divinity to be found in Oxford. Nor can the sluggish blockhead any longer conceal his shame at his indolence in not perusing the literature of his age under an assumed contempt for the minds that produce it, for the writers of

these long traduced tales are found amongst the leading men of every department of intellectual activity—lawyers, physicians, clergymen, men of science, statesmen; indeed it would be difficult to find a dozen men of any note in the kingdom who have not at some time or other made some attempt in the novelist's art. Novels are now the poems of the time—prose-poems, and they are composed by the authors who in any previous age would have expressed their thoughts in verse, counting their fingers and courting the muse.

If the art has changed much, yet more has the artist altered. At the outset novel-writers formed a humble division of the profession of letters, now it would not be too much to arrogate for them, in conjunction with journalists, (and a successful journalist is almost always a novelist as well,) the dignity of the first rank in literature. It is now universally acknowledged that the production of a powerful and artistically written novel requires a greater effort and higher mental qualities than any other kind of composition. At one time the historian was regarded as a literary entity, far above the tale-scribbler, but to any one endowed with critical discernment it is evident that the best historians of our generation are the offspring of the novel writers. It is only a short time ago that we heard a novelist, to whose genius the world delights to pay homage, say, that if a disease under which he laboured developed and threatened to be permanent, he should devote his impaired faculties to the study of state-papers and manuscripts, and the production of an historical work. Anyhow, the novelist, whatever may be the status of his brethren, holds no inferior position in literature; he may have his professional equals, but he is subordinate to none. And in this day when questioned on the social standing and condition of authors, we immediately turn to the cases of men who, though they may be exerting themselves strenuously as journalists and critical writers,

are chiefly known to the world and are celebrated as novelists. Let the reader put the question to himself.

The position of the novelist then is that also of the author—in the most dignified acceptation of that word. And what a change has the writer by profession undergone! He has emerged from the times when to live by authorship was to be strictly contemptible, and to die of starvation; when so little care was felt for even the best and most popular writers that no Boswell, even for a moment, deemed it worth his while to chronicle their experiences or even their deeds,—so that Shakspeare is well-nigh as mythical a personage to learned antiquarians as the blind father of song, Homer. He has passed through the long period when the wealthy noble found it to his interest to give him a mean and degrading support. It gratified the great man's vanity to be known as a patron, for somehow it was getting abroad that a poet, apart from his rags and hunger, was really venerable,—and if so, why it followed as a matter of course, that the *patron* of such a one was yet more worthy of respect! Moreover, it served my lord's purpose to have in his retinue an obsequious varlet who could indite doggrel lampoons on his political opponents, and pasquinades on scornful mistresses. How the wretches of "the muse," writhed and groaned under the humiliations of such servitude, striving, and always in vain, to retain their self-respect! What strong entreaties did they send up to the gods for independence, though what they needed, was not independence, but *dependence on many instead of one*. This is what all energetic and healthy-minded men mean when they pray for independence. It is generally asserted that *companies* have no morality; but a multitude is a much more conscientious, and liberal, and considerate master than an individual. Not that it was impossible for a writer to find a good employer, or to get great—even unduly great, rewards for his labour and genius. Perhaps the era of patrons was

the best of all times for the shrewd, keen, watchful practitioner of the quill, who knew how to cling fast to the robes of a powerful leader, and without the impediments of a lofty mind and moral integrity could flatter with the audacity, and filch with the cunning, of a lacquey. Then next followed the stage of inexpressible hardships to the author, when it is usually stated the system of patrons had been abolished, and "the intelligent public" had not yet grown to sufficient numbers to supply their place. What caused the system of patrons to fall into desuetude? There has been much nice discussion on this point; and some with no small show of argument refusing to admit the fact, aver that patrons existed in the reign of George the Third, and George the Fourth, in numbers as great as in the time of Anne. The diffusion of polite learning amongst the people produced, they say, such swarms of poetasters and scribblers, that the market was completely glutted with them—the booksellers were unable to find them employment, and the entire peerage would have been insufficient for their maintenance. So unceasing were the applications made at the doors of the nobility by these locusts, that men of wealth and station were compelled to take steps in self-defence, and had recourse to the well-known scheme of mutually binding each other, under a penalty of forfeiting a sum of money, not to accept the burthensome honour of a dedication. But though wily gentlemen, who were not sufficiently stern and hard to refuse their guineas point-blank, and *without a reason*, to poor starving devils who solicited alms in the names of the muses, sought protection under the subterfuge, the patron-system not the less flourished,—indeed, patrons increased rather than diminished in number, but not in the same proportion as those whom they were expected to support. It is true that Dr. Johnson was expelled by menials from Lord Chesterfield's outer rooms, and Goldsmith never obtained much support from any but the publishers; but their

contemporaries had other experiences; Fielding though he drew largely from booksellers was also a recipient from patrons—the wealthy and generous Allen supported him with money, and his habit of borrowing guineas, the mode in which a man of letters ordinarily petitioned his patrons for relief, was sneered at by Horace Walpole; Percy had a patron, or he would not have been a Bishop; Savage had a patron—and prettily he treated him; Sterne luxuriated in patrons—and as his publishers best knew turned them to good account. A part or rather an off-shoot of the patron system was the plan of publishing by subscription,—a scheme by which an author, if he had a wide acquaintance and a good band of touters to aid him, might squeeze money for a book not from one solitary nobleman, but from thousands of wealthy persons at the same time. To return to the case of Yorick; his sermons and volumes of fiction were not only supported by a crowd of high-born distinguished personages, each of whom by the influence of his or her name in the subscription list, and by money paid for copies, performed all the functions of patronage, but many of them also undertook to exert themselves and use the weight of their names and rank in making applications to their friends to become subscribers. What was this but an instance of an author dealing with an excess of patrons? It may be stated that in many cases the subscriptions were not solicited, but were sent in to the author, as “orders” from the public might be to the vendor of any other commodity,—just as they were made by strangers in a comparatively humble position of life for Pope’s Homer, and the Dictionary of Samuel Johnson, who, notwithstanding *a certain letter*, was too sensible a man to refuse any crumbs of patronage that were thrown to him. And unquestionably the “subscription-plan” did in a certain manner combine an appeal to the wealthy and noble, with a petition for support to the general public; but not the less for that was its existence

due rather to a super-abundance than a dearth of patrons. The *modus operandi* for getting up these lists, the entreaties in their behalf preferred by authors at first or second hand to ministers of state and people of fashion, and the fact that the great were expected to give double or ten times the price named for what they ordered, or to order from ten to a hundred copies, and direct only one to be sent to their house, all show that the subscription system was one that proceeded from, and was maintained by a superabundance of aristocratic supporters of literary men. And the palmier days of that system had scarcely come when it is popularly asserted that the race of patrons had become extinct, and authors had been given over to the niggard care of the uneducated public. How would Madame D'Arblay have ever reaped the preposterous sums she did for her dull books, if "the great" had ceased to take an individual interest in particular writers? It is only in the present generation that in this country we have agreed to attach to an author, who degrades his vocation by seeking "subscriptions," the odium and reproach of being a beggar.

We believe there has been much misrepresentation on this point, and do not hesitate to avow our concurrence with the sentiments just stated. The disappearance of "the literary patron" is in our opinion one of those *unquestionable facts* of history that never took place. From the days when Erasmus looked for aid and succour to a few distinguished individuals who were possessed of mental cultivation as well as wealth, we believe that "patrons,"—that is, rich people able and anxious to give out of their abundant stores assistance to men of letters—have as regards numbers always been on the increase. When printed books were new, and intellectual pursuits were interesting only to a limited number of persons, authors were rare, and it was only here and there that they found protectors; at one court, in a great statesman; at another in a powerful ec-

clesiastic ; at a third, in some royal and enlightened lady. But then, it nearly always was the case that the benefactors and the benefited were the best of their kinds,—the munificent patron gave his countenance and money, not to scholarly parasites, but zealous students and thinkers ; and none sought his protection unless in their natural powers or acquirements they had ample certificates of merit. As education, however, became more general, the two classes rapidly augmented in number, and retrograded in quality. The man of fashion, the gallant, or whatever it might please him to be called, deemed it becoming in him to have a smattering of literature, and to be able to turn a stanza, and to lead about with him in his train a poet or play-writer. Immediately a class of creatures sprang up, half-ape, and altogether sycophant, to jest, mimic, and lampoon on paper—and push the old house-fools out of fashion. With improved manners and greater refinement of taste, generations, as they succeeded each other, witnessed important changes both in the writers and those they catered for ; and it must be allowed that degrading as the relations subsisting between them were to both, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages of the system : literature, though often debased, was upon the whole fostered, and many a man of real genius was enabled to pursue his studies and prosecute his art who would otherwise have died in neglect. In various phases these two bodies have figured in every generation since the rise of letters. It is a mistake to say that aristocratic or wealthy patrons no longer exist ; they are found frequently ;—it is only the other day that a capitalist endowed a poet with an income for life, so that he might pursue his art unvexed by worldly toil and moil ; the last generation abounded in cases of noble individuals making large donations to poets and writers ; and if such aid were now generally required by authors of real genius, patrons in abundance would be found to furnish it. But, thank

Heaven! there is no need of them, or their eleemosynary grants. Poverty is no longer to be regarded as the inseparable condition of genius. Poor authors are still common enough, but not more so than the poor members of any profession that is at the same time lucrative and honourable. Briefless barristers, physicians without patients, starving curates without cures,—are these not numerous? The prizes in literature are high indeed. Walter Scott earned by his pen upwards of five hundred thousand pounds, and the highest sum which he ever received for a work of fiction is considerably less than what has been paid for a novel to more than one of his successors. The pen, too, can win its way to the envied ranks of the hereditary nobility, for in Macaulay, the historian, rather than the politician, is rewarded with a barony. What levelling visionary would have dared to propose that the same honour should be bestowed on Gibbon? And besides these greater triumphs, the field of authorship has many attractions for the ambitious. Besides the *éclat* that now surrounds a writer of recognised intellect, the pecuniary emoluments of the literary profession, to a man who is only ordinarily successful as a journalist, a writer of fiction, or a contributor to the leading reviews, are far from contemptible. In all the learned professions, save the unorganized one of authorship, much capital and time must be expended before the practitioner, whatever talent he may possess, can earn a penny. Besides the expenses of a tedious and costly education, the physician must be a householder in a good quarter, keep his carriage, and grow grey before he can hope to earn a yearly income adequate for a gentlemanly establishment. The barrister must waste the best years of his life in the unalluring study and less grateful practice of the law, and submit to the extortions of professional etiquette, and after all deem himself lucky if at fifty years of age he earns £2,000 per annum, and has a remote prospect of the bench. And against his meeting with

such a fortunate termination to his toil and outlay of capital, the chances are many. He will have many equals in calamity, if with ability and learning, in his old age he find himself penniless and unknown. But a young author, starting with nothing but his brains (of course we presume he has them) and five shillings wherewith to buy writing materials, can at least be secure of a crust; and if he be industrious and determined to overcome obstacles, he may also feel certain of decent sufficiency. A reporter of parliamentary debates, a journalist, or an essayist, whose name the world is scarcely acquainted with, may earn an income that has never rewarded the exertions of many a Queen's Counsel or Fellow of the College of Physicians. This prosperity of the profession of literature is at the same time an effect and cause of its increased popularity. In England wealth is so respected, that were it possible for a large number of scavengers to make at the same time in London several thousand pounds a-year, we do not hesitate to say, that the purest blood of our noblesse would ere long be running in the veins of master-sweeps. With us every calling, however mean in itself, becomes honourable by custom, if it can be shown to be lucrative by experience, for the simple reason that the enterprizing of the best ranks of society join it. Thus it is with the literary profession. The reproach of being a penny-a-liner is now never applied to a feuilletoniste, save by miserable wretches who have just been lashed in the columns of a newspaper, because *penny-a-lining* (by which we presume is meant article-writing) is so paying and honourable an employment that the eminent members of every profession, officers of the highest rank in army and navy, cabinet ministers, and dignitaries of the Church—are ready to place their intellects and information at the service of the editors of leading periodicals. Of course, it is needless to illustrate how, on the other hand, this prosperity is a consequence of popularity. The vast revenues now drawn

from the public by our most successful authors, are made in catering for the amusement and instruction of the multitudes from high to low. Perhaps a book is first offered in a costly form to the wealthy, as a novel dainty for the owners of heavy purses; but, if it has any heart of goodness in it, it is sure, ere many years are over, to be reprinted; and it is in the pence of the millions rather than the guineas of the wealthy few that the writer finds his most liberal payment. And it is this popular support that enables writers of merit to throw off the burden of aristocratic patronage. What a release—what a glorious exaltation it is for them! In their dependence on the *many* they *have* a continual source of the proudest, and sweetest, and most justifiable self-gratulation; in their old dependence on *the few* they found it a hard—indeed, an impossible—task, to retain their self-respect, surrounded by benevolence that regarded them with compassion, and by hatred that sneered at them as hirelings and valets.

The position of Mr. Charles Dickens is the best possible illustration of these observations. He is, emphatically, the *popular* author, in the best and most catholic sense of the word. He addresses himself to all classes of the community, and all classes respond with a ready and grateful attention. Little does he stand in need of the smiles and douceurs of a wealthy patron; for every individual in the kingdom, from the lord and lady of the aristocracy, to the hard-worked and horny-handed operative, makes him an annual offering of a few pence, and in return for such small payment obtains an enjoyment for which a millionaire would gladly expend thousands, if he could not get it for less.

By birth Mr. Dickens was a member of the middle-classes, and connected with the profession he has done so much to raise in public esteem. His father, Mr. John Dickens, had an appointment under Government in the

Navy Pay Department, and in the discharge of its duties had to reside now at Plymouth, now at Portsmouth, and then at Sheerness or Chatham. On the conclusion of "the war," he quitted the public service with a pension, and, going up to London became a reporter of parliamentary debates. Mr. Charles Dickens was born in 1812, at Landport, Portsmouth, and is consequently at the present time in the prime of manly vigour, and is a considerably younger man than Bulwer, Disraeli, or Ainsworth. He was designed for the profession of the law, but the prospect of toiling in the dull routine of a solicitor's office was hateful to him, so he entreated and obtained his father's permission to throw himself into the ranks of "the press," and begin the battle of life as a short-hand reporter. At first he was engaged on "The Free Press," a paper of ultra-liberal principles, but ere long he was placed on the staff of the "Morning Chronicle." While acting as parliamentary reporter on that journal, he became a marked man amongst his fellow workers; his reports were always the best, and were made with astonishing facility. He was the quickest *verbatim* reporter to be found in either House. In 1836-7 he exercised other and more attractive talents in the columns of the "Morning Chronicle," for in them he offered to the public his "Sketches by Boz." The circumstances that led him to the selection of this *nom de plume* are worth relating. He had a little brother so like Goldsmith's "Moses" in the "Vicar of Wakefield," that he always called him by that name; but a wee lisping sister, who imagined she could not do better than imitate her big brother in all things, unable to pronounce the word, converted it with many contortions of her little lips into Bozie or Boz. The success of these "Sketches," though possessing only little of the power of their author's subsequent writings, was such that he immediately sprung into fame. He had not to wait patiently through long years of

neglect ere his genius was recognised and appreciated. He may almost be mentioned with Byron as an instance of juvenile celebrity. He was still a boy in years when he was admitted by universal acclamation to a foremost place amongst living writers. Taking a wide survey of literature we find that novels of unquestionable excellence and originality may not be looked for from youthful authors; Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sir Walter Scott, and Thackeray are a strong array in support of this position; but Charles Dickens is the grand exception to the general rule. He had not numbered thirty years when he was beyond dispute the first novelist of his day. His triumphant career began thus early, and it has been almost without a reverse or check of any kind. In quick succession after the "Sketches by Boz" came "Pickwick," "Nicholas Nickleby," "Oliver Twist," "Master Humphrey's Clock," "American Notes for General Circulation," (1842), "Martin Chuzzlewit," "Dombey and Son," "David Copperfield," "Bleak House," "Hard Times," "Little Dorrit," the "Christmas Tales," &c., &c. On the 21st of January, 1846, he started the "Daily News," an undertaking in which he met with only partial success, and partial success in the enterprises of men accustomed to complete triumph, is too apt to be regarded as synonymous with failure; but against the unsatisfactory results of his endeavours in connection with the "Daily News," must be put the "Household Words," with its circulation of sixty thousand numbers a week. Looking at time and results we are unable to point in the annals of literature to a career of authorship so productive, so useful, so prosperous, and so splendid as that of Mr. Dickens. He is still at a time of life when most men are content to pluck their first laurels.

Mr. Dickens is so much loved, that he is to a great degree exempt from that extravagant abuse which all persons of distinction must make up their minds to endure;

but he by no means escapes being misunderstood and misrepresented. If all people saw with his eyes, it would be a strong argument that his was a very common-place mind; and if there were none ready to slander and traduce him, the fair inference would be that he was neither a good nor an earnest man. Even those who admire him fail to appreciate him duly. Of course many of his readers would as enthusiastically admire the style and brilliant humour of the "Post Office Directory," as his greatest productions, if it only happened to be the fashion to regard the leviathan "Who's who?" as a powerful work of imagination; but apart from the good-natured mortals who say what they are taught and repeat what they are told, there are many acute minds, who, cordially sympathizing with one quality of Mr. Dicken's genius, can see that quality only. He is a caricaturist. Emerson sees little in him but this. And *so he is* a caricaturist, but not the less is he a great poet. He is a caricaturist as Hogarth was one, in his pictures producing effects by the exaggeration and obtrusion of certain particular features of his subjects, but always having a lofty object in view, and expending such care and such a wealth of thought on the elaboration of each part, that the sagacious examination of each square inch is, as Charles Lamb shewed, like the critical study of a noble poem. Of all his larger works "Pickwick" is the one which affords most countenance to this charge, for the preponderating element in its humour is caricature. With the buoyant heart and high animal spirits of youth and health, the author allowed his imagination riot in the ridiculous. Surrounding himself with a band of cockney sportsmen, endowed with absurdities such as no previous romance-writer had thought of, he magnified every salient feature of their characters with the glasses of burlesque sentiment, and left out no touch that could add to the boisterous merriment of the result. But even here, in the wild holiday of genius waking to a full self-

consciousness, the jests only thinly veil from sight the workings of the true poet's nature, and as the laughter that is madness subsides, we hear the soft low melody of our holiest affections. It is even discernible in that story how the writer, as he went on laughing and provoking irresistible laughter, was startled at discovering himself brooding over solemn thoughts too deep for tears. A voice crying for help appealed to the humanity within him. His next work had more of graver purpose and high resolve in it, and each succeeding tale that has come from his pen, while having in undiminished excellence the pungent humour and light playfulness of satire that first made "Boz" dear to Englishmen, has surpassed its predecessor in moral force.

And here scarcely less than in his genius we find the secret of his glory and usefulness. With an earnest heart within him he would not, like Sir Walter Scott, be content to regard his art as only calculated to *amuse*; he saw what an instrument it might become in the hands of the lay-preacher to the elevation and instruction of mankind, and seeing this he earnestly and unceasingly has made good use of his knowledge. His pen is ever at work illustrating a text and enforcing a moral. To the practical man's question, "what is it for?" whenever it is applied to any of Dickens's books, a plain direct answer can always be returned. Now he brings into contempt the pride and selfishness that lurk beneath social respectability; at another time he leads us to consider the wants and requirements of the destitute and uneducated; a gigantic system of tyranny is grinding and weighing down the poor and helpless—he exposes it; the abuses and abominations of a court of law demand correction—it is his pen that rouses legislators to the work of reform; bad school-masters, sham rulers, negligent priests, false nobles, drunken nurses, cruel task-masters, dishonest speculators, corrupt practices, partial laws—he has exposed them all in turn; and on the other hand he has

been the champion, proctector, and encourager of earnest and well intentioned workmen, (whatever their work may be and however humble their powers), and of all benevolent endeavours,—zealous ministers, wise reforms, the heroism that runs its course of obloquy before the world, and the humble household virtues that are scarcely felt beyond the domestic hearth, and are too often unrewarded there!

There are those who affect a disdain for this high moral purpose in the novel. It is not uncommon to meet with fluent gentlemen who are never so happy as when pouring a watery ridicule upon it. Even in organs of literary criticism, especially those that, in the fashion of all pompous twaddlers incapable of seeing a yard before their eyes, pride themselves on their *practical* views and sound common sense, we often find the healthy tone and noble aims of modern novelists sneered at. “These fictions afflict us with their sickening cant and affectation of religious zeal; the pert argumentativeness of the logic schools, and the drawl of the conventicle flavour every chapter of them. Why don’t their writers exert themselves to *amuse* us with tales *in the style of the old masters*, and leave preaching to the clergy, and moralizing to the occupants of professorial chairs? Why, when we want a love story such as Smollett delighted to paint, must we be condemned to hear a sermon, or a political pamphlet, or an essay on morals?” Such are the sorry silly remarks we often hear made. And it is to be observed that they are uttered or indited with an air of self-sufficiency that forms a contrast, inexpressibly ludicrous, with the feebleness of the opinions themselves. These lofty censors always imply that they are specially qualified to judge on the questions under discussion, and could if it so pleased them dazzle the world to blindness by drawing away the veil from before the fierce sun of their intelligence. *They* of course could solve every problem of political economy that has vexed the brain of Mill, or write you in a

fortnight a book on Moral Philosophy that should mark the commencement of a new era in the history of the human understanding, or in a spare half-hour or so dash you off a tale that should make the present generation of bunglers in the art of fiction heartily ashamed of themselves. Is it advisable to pay any attention to these pompous triflers? Would not argument expended on them be a foolish waste of reason? It would perhaps be better to leave them alone, for no power on earth can better their condition; in the slough where they are they must roll for ever. Still charity impels us to throw them a few suggestions. It appears *they* are bored with the moral earnestness of the modern novel, and the current works of fiction fail to interest *them*. But may this not indicate some deficiency in *them*, and not a failing in the books? Is it not just possible that they *ought*, as rational creatures, to take pleasure in such reading? The voice of society is unquestionably against them, and condemns them as the victims of their own stupidity. The wisest and the best as well as the multitudes of men concur in studying with delight and admiration these works; no other kind of novel is so largely patronized by readers of all classes, pursuits, and degrees of intelligence. Let them think of the novels that, during the last few years have produced a startling impression on the public, and say whether or no they possess the miserable zeal for making the world better, or at least wiser. "Never too late to mend," "The Newcomes," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Heir of Redclyffe," "Coningsby," "Hawkestone," "Alton Locke," and the universally read works of Dickens; all these make a show of moral purpose of some kind or other; their objects are to combat prejudices, alleviate class oppressions, sweep down obstacles in the way of social regeneration, or lead men to commune with their own hearts and be still. It would seem indeed that society was tired of being merely amused, and thirsted for instruction even in

its moments of relaxation. Is it not just possible that the many are right in this instance and the few wrong? indeed is it not more than possible, since we find, in the ranks of the many who form the rule, the most learned and distinguished individuals of our times, while the small band of dissentients is composed of not the most eminent people alive? Perhaps after all Plato was not wrong in thinking that the deep reasonings of philosophy were put before a reader most forcibly, lucidly, and attractively in agreeable discussions similar to those which are a principal ingredient of the modern novel.

Indeed, to any one unacquainted with the nature and life of men it would be a fit subject for marvel that unquestionably *popular* and *fascinating* writers should be condemned for being *earnest*, for exercising their exquisite genius for illustration on subjects of vital importance, for being too instructive, for not being frivolous. But the wonder ceases when we examine the constitution of society. It is not every one who can alter with the age, and in advanced years adopt the sentiments and aspirations of a new generation. Is it wonderful, then, that those whose tastes were formed at the close of the last century should be somewhat perplexed by the poetry of the present time? A venerable lady, whose long renowned wit remains to her untarnished in her more than eightieth year, said, a short time since, to the writer of these pages, with infinite frankness and humour, "It's all well for you young men to praise Tennyson and Carlyle, but I am wearied to death by moral illuminators; give me back my poor Byron and Moore. The world is getting a great deal too good for us old sinners." Again, in addition to these comparatively respectable and honourable opponents of the modern novel, is a tribe of impenitent thieves, who, for their delinquencies and innumerable offences, have been soundly and repeatedly whipped by satirical writers of fiction, and who naturally bear no more

goodwill to the punishment and those who inflict it than a school-boy does to the rod and the master who is in the act of applying it. As soon as the novel became a terror to flagrant evil-doers, of course the evil-doers began to entertain sentiments exactly the reverse of complimentary to the novel. Jack Shephard regarded Newgate as an altogether objectionable structure, that had better be converted into a monster boozing-ken, or house of call for highwaymen. Doubtless many a gentle costermonger, who longs to beat his wife's brains out, is of opinion that Jack Ketch ought "to be put down;" and many a pick-pocket, undergoing a term of seclusion in Horsemonger Lane gaol, feels and speaks strongly about "the license of modern magistrates." And doubtless, also, when these gentlemen favour the world with a narrative of their wrongs and antipathies, they do so with much dignity and high-sounding preamble, for the modern rogue has the knack of prating that much resembles preaching, as likewise the modern donkey possesses the accomplishment of braying with a solemnity altogether unprecedented in the annals of the long-eared kind.

But, however Dickens's genius has developed, and his style has improved; he retains the old *manner* and relies on the same *means* that he used at the outset. Let him be termed a caricaturist, for in *style* he is one, and his separate scenes all possess the leading quality of caricature—exaggeration of certain features, and usually of the ludicrous ones. His claim to be regarded as a great poet is to be found in the uses he makes of his innumerable caricatures, and the result he extracts from them, and in his power of anatomizing and analyzing the human mind, and holding up to view every separate fibre of sentiment and passion, and detecting the essences of which it is composed. His style and mannerisms are familiar to us. Who has not critically examined and endeavoured to imitate his peculiar descriptions? Whatever it may be that he wishes to pre-

sent to the reader's mind, be it a little back-parlour or kitchen, or the sea-shore, or a shop-lad's costume, he is minute to the veriest trifles ; every object is mentioned, and catalogued with patient exactness ; but this microscopic attention to details never wearies, for the language is brisk, sharp, and merry, and the intelligence is always kept alive by a succession of droll conceits, quaint similes, playful fancies. Some of his descriptive passages, however, differ from these daguerreotypes. When the grandeur of the subject requires it, he rejects anything that approaches to flippancy ; and his language, now softly plaintive, now sonorous, fervid, and glowing, rolls on in stirring rhythm and majestic melody. Many outbursts of feeling can be pointed to in his books, which, in numbers as well as matter, are poetry instead of prose, and, without the omission or alteration of position of a word, can be arranged in verses that surpass the best of Southey's. Of the dramatic power of his scenes, it is needless to speak. All his novels *act* well, and seem written with a view to their being put on the stage ; indeed, if we are not mistaken, it has somewhere been stated that such is the case. His genius is eminently dramatic ; his first literary ambition was to write for the stage, as may be seen by the "Village Coquettes," the only juvenile effort which failed of success, that we are aware of his having made, the only one of his many guns that missed fire. His mimic powers, too, are very unusual ; had he not been a great writer, he would have been a celebrated actor.

The influence of a great author may be divided and placed under two heads—his influence on his art, and his influence on those he addresses who cannot materially, at least immediately, affect that art ; the impression made by him on literature, and that produced on the great commonwealth of readers. How highly we esteem Mr. Dickens, as one who has made the noblest use of his abilities for the

furtherance of the great ends of life, the foregoing pages must have shown. But we are by no means prepared to say that his genius, fruitful though it has been of good to *mankind*, has not been productive of some harm to literature. Of course an artist is not to be held responsible for the extravagances and follies of his imitators; but still, if he call into life a swarm of mean copyists who perseveringly insult good taste, they must be regarded as part of the evil effects of his intellect. One bad consequence of Mr. Dickens's genius is a crowd of feeble scribblers, who, by cockney vulgarisms and a pert affectation of smartness, have contributed not a little to vitiate the style of our current literature. This was to be expected. Taking a strong hold of the mind of the nation, "Pickwick" excited to a morbid degree our love of the ridiculous; the novelty of its humour so captivated our imaginations, that, for a time, the risible was the only side of life we cared about; under the fascination of the mighty wizard we went about into kennels, and beershops, and theatres, hunting for "characters," "seeing life," "studying human nature;" and in our predetermination to find "life" very grotesque and funny, and ridiculous, we generally failed to heed the stern and solemn manifestations of that which we took so much trouble to go in search of. What wonder then that to satisfy such a general craving for acquaintance with "flash" society, a set of scribblers, bearing about the same relation to accomplished authors that the practitioners of "thimble-rig" and the keepers of betting-houses do to the patrician members of the turf, arose to chronicle in slang phraseology the proceedings of "fast" men and comic black-guardism. Hence came a taint of low-breeding to current literature, that is being washed away, but will, nevertheless, remain for many a day. Honest, sensible men, with good heads and information worth imparting, felt that it was right, immediately they took their pens in their

hands, to be funny—to strain at that kind of wit which produces laughter. It was the same in conversation; jaunty talking, dreary puns, scintillations of feeble ridicule, to which Egyptian darkness was preferable, and small jokes, hiding the poverty of their dimensions under exaggerations of expression, came into fashion. What is so dull as a bad piece of pyrotechny?

But this is a small evil, indeed, to set against all the good which Mr. Dickens has effected. We have mentioned it very much because it was the sum and entire substance of all that can be advanced against him as a writer. But if we attempted to enumerate in succession, all the items of the enormous debt of gratitude our nation, and all civilized countries, owe him, how impossible we should find it to accomplish the undertaking! His benefits to mankind are as innumerable as the flowers that cover the earth, some of the most beautiful and modest of which they also resemble, in being sheltered from observation. There is not a human heart in these islands, so fruitful of wretchedness and depravity, which Dickens has not at some time or other influenced for the better; not a home, however humble and tenanted with evil passions, that his good genius does not occasionally visit, like a peace angel, garnishing, setting in order, and sanctifying with pleasant words of hope. Amongst us there is not a grinding taskmaster who would not have been more extortionate, there is not a mean nature that would not have been more selfish, and there is not a flippant worldling who would not have been more enamoured of frivolity, had Dickens never lived to write. Was not his influence so invariably for good, that we feel he is powerless to exercise it for wrong, it would be fearful to contemplate it. Directly we examine our relations with him, we are positively alarmed at the sway he has held over us,—how we have been in his hands only plastic clay that he has fashioned—to all the honour

it was capable of. We cannot walk without his leading strings, or speak without using his texts, or look out upon the world save through his eyes. Indeed it is not our world, but his, that we gaze upon. If an incident render a morning's walk eventful, we refer to his books for a parallel, or explanation, or comment. The crowds that hurry past us in the public ways we classify in a manner he has taught us, and we christen them with names taken from his fictions. It is the same on the gravest occasions, and the most trivial. In the Houses of Parliament, or the law-courts, arguments are illustrated and pointed by an allusion to the Jarndyces and Barnacles, as naturally and with as much effect as if Jarndyce and the chief of the Barnacles were veritable items in the Post-Office Directory. In short we have so adopted, or he has so embued us with, his views of the outer world, that in moments of self introspection we are almost frightened lest we should have been too confiding and unquestioning followers. Such in its magnitude is his influence on each one of us, in regard to the external world he has surrounded us with. But there is another even more important division of his artistic influence to be glanced at, which consists not in the colouring he has given to the non-ego of each of us, or simply in the hold he has taken of our young intelligences as an interpreter of social problems, but is found in that kindly humour which he has infused equally into our heads and hearts, stimulating what is best in both of them to extreme activity, and enabling us to think freely and independently—from the force and virtue imparted to us—not in mere imitation of his movements, or as the mechanical echoes of his words, though truly following him, and in all things doing as we could never have done without his aid. The most cheering feature of the present generation (which has better men, and even better bankers than Sir J. D. Paul,) is the growth and diffusion of that large and sublime charity which finds

a home as much in the intellectual, as the moral qualities of our nature. Class prejudices are so far discountenanced that, though they doubtless are the master-laws of the existence of many, it is regarded as scandalous to be the victim of them, and any sane man would blush to be pointed out as their upholder. Spiritual rancour, not only setting class against class, but infusing malevolence, and scorn, and all evil passions into the bosoms of those whose worldly lot is identical, is dying out. To think the best *of* and *for* all is growing into a habit *with* all. It would be wrong to put this down as the necessary result of the increased mental cultivation of society; for intellectual culture is by no means of necessity the parent of those sentiments which inspire us with a desire to add to the happiness of our species; the greatest refinement and polish of the understanding may exist in masses as well as individuals, side by side with the moral qualities most opposed to Christian charity.

The fact, that during these last twenty-five years, throughout which the schoolmaster has been so busy in informing the brain, and society has been ever applying stronger and yet stronger stimulants to the ingenuity, we have not fallen into the lowest depths of depravity, but on the contrary have made advances in our national morality not less astounding than those made in our external civilization, is a most encouraging one. And it is mainly to be attributed to our hearts having been watched, cherished, and informed by a divinely instructed writer. We have grown in wisdom and cunning, but have not lost one jot of our love of truth; we have expended a perhaps lavish wealth of energy on the arts of peace, but the old lion, wrapped up like a lady's spaniel, by our Manchester silks, is as wakeful and courageous as ever; we have become richer, and, at the same time, less besotted, less luxurious, less selfish. Whence is this? Take any honest-hearted Englishman, and probe cunningly

the depths of his nature to discover why it is that he would scorn to tell a lie, to desert a fallen friend, to reap benefit from a deed of shame? that he is so impatient of shams and pretenders? and would strike to the ground any man who asked him to sell his honour for gold? You will find the answer in his affections, in a chivalric belief in the excellence of woman, and the dignity of honesty, in a strong love for the memory of a mother who first taught him to pray, or for lisping babes of his own just learning to falter out accents of entreaty. Whatever he may be, and however circumstanced, without family ties or with them, whatever the affections may be which his experience of life may have made him hold most dear, in them will be found the keynote of his generosity. But carry the examination yet farther. Draw him out on any subject calculated to make him display his sympathies and antipathies. Get him to unbosom himself. He flashes up, his chest rises, and the thunder of his voice rolls about. But, how is this?—every assertion of a principle is backed by a reference to Dickens, he cannot touch on a social difficulty without an illustration from “Boz;” he talks Dickens, laughs Dickens—for the time being is Dickens.

A writer may be very successful, and make a great impression on his age, and yet his name may never be heard of beyond a small circle of students. Even authors who have aimed at, and attained to a certain amount of popular notoriety, for whose works there has been a demand of several editions, and whose names are in London heard as frequently as the postman’s rap, have been surprised at finding themselves comparatively unknown in provincial towns, and discovering the highest corporation officers of thriving boroughs in utter ignorance of their literary achievements. Of Charles Dickens’s fame a grand feature is its universality. His name is as much a “Household Word” in every sequestered hamlet lying between the most

extreme points of our *home* islands, as it is in the metropolis; and he is as well known in the United States, Canada, and Australia, as he is in the city round St. Paul's. Wherever there are men of English origin, speaking the English tongue, there the genius of Charles Dickens is one of the important facts of life. The avidity also with which translations of his works are bought and read in all regions of the earth where there is a literature to translate them into, is an evidence of his popularity in nations not speaking the Anglo-Saxon, that everyone is aware of; but it is amongst ourselves and our near kin that we naturally expect him, and find him to be most cordially and enthusiastically admired. And how deep and all-embracing is that sentiment! Throughout the length and breadth of the land, what genuine and unswerving loyalty there is to Charles Dickens. It is the same in the hall and the hamlet; only in the dwellings of the poor, that love, like every other affection, is more earnest and out-speaking. The humble toilers of manufacturing towns are by no means the especial and only adherents of the great author among the poor; for the simple peasants of secluded districts, where no labour is performed, that is not in some way or other connected with the culture of the soil, believe in him with a hearty confidence that is a touching satire on the infidelity and scepticism in vogue amongst the refined. There is none whose name so thrills their honest hearts—none whom their horny hands and slow tongues would so obstinately defend. The writer of these pages knows cottages on bleak wolds, over which the winter's winds scream terribly, and cabins fixed in hollows beside damp lanes, where every evening, odd numbers, black and greasy as an old fustian jacket from being thumbed, of the works of Boz—and even stray leaves, sacredly preserved—are spelt out and sobbed over by the family circle. And when the read-

ing is over, they talk first of the story, and then of its writer; whereupon, some rugged patriarch of the plough, whose voice is respected, though he does not know a letter of the alphabet, and has learnt the sad story of Ham and Emily through the lips of his little grand-daughter (who reads like a scholar), tells out slowly to his attentive audience how Charles Dickens is "one on 'em, and also was one on 'em, and what's more, always will be one on 'em, and nought can take him from 'em, for his heart is right set," and to us it has ever seemed far nobler to rule men's minds with words, than to drive their bodies with bayonets.

And in every class and grade of society there is a similar sentiment to this. Universally as the genius of Dickens and the elements of his intellectual greatness are discussed on all sides, we still are more prone to regard his moral qualities. His mental endowments take a second place; and ere we say our critical say about the qualities of his humour, the merit of his satire, or the strength of his imagination, we pay homage to him as the good and true.

The popularity of Scott astonished the last generation, but it has been far surpassed by that of Dickens. Scott's success was altogether unprecedented, his novels were read by nearly all the educated persons of his time, but they were never perused by the multitudes we so feelingly denominate "the lower orders." Had his name been mentioned, at the height of his fame, to an ordinary village congregation, scarce any one out of "the set" of the parson, the lawyer, and the doctor, would have known aught else of the man to whom it belonged. Sir Walter has now an advantage which Dickens will have to wait for—we trust many years. There is no such good standing-ground for the reputation of a really great man as the lid of his own coffin. A writer may live to

see his works accepted as classic, but death gives security and fresh lustre to his fame. There are many who feel an impiety has been uttered when Dickens is declared Scott's superior; and there are some who go out of their way to assert the immeasurably greater excellence of the latter. And it is natural that these defenders of the authors of Waverley should maintain their position obstinately. The Abbotsford writings have a powerful hold on the affections of us all. They comprise the *first novels we ever read*—their heroines were our *first loves*—it was in the hey-day of balmy youth, that we laughed and wept, loved and hated, shuddered and fought through their powerful and stirring scenes. At this day when we open the "Heart of Midlothian" we have a recollection—so vivid that it seems like a repetition—of our old emotions. What wonder that we attribute to the genius of the poet the elastic freshness of our old pulses! that we take the halo that once rested luminously over our youth, and place it round the brows of the writer who so stirred us!

It would be ridiculous in a work of this kind to attempt any analysis or classification of Mr. Dickens's numerous conceptions. They constituted a world in themselves, and to become fully acquainted with each of them would require a long period of study. What is remarkable about the entire collection of them is that, notwithstanding their numbers, there are no repetitions amongst them; no old friends peep out in the later stories, taken from the characters of the preceding tales, and only dressed in slightly different costumes.

Mr. Dickens is always new and without precedent in his conceptions; he never, as it is termed, "reproduces himself." To say that an author is prone to repeat himself is no charge against him, if the repetition is an improvement on the first attempt. Mr. Thackeray is a remarkable instance of an author using and re-using and using yet again

the characters, situations, events, descriptions, and even conversations of his works; but with him reiteration is never significant of barren wit, for every time he reproduces an old piece he adds strength and delicacy to the picture. It does not, therefore, at all follow that we should have a lower estimate of Mr. Dickens, if it could be proved to us that he had made the same materials do service on several different occasions. Still it is a fact that naturally arouses our wonder that the motley throngs that people his fictions, each of which is ark-like in its abundance of living creatures, are so constituted that no two persons are exactly alike. There are many fops, many villains, many ruffians, many misers, many wretched children, many foolish old maids, many high-blooded young men, and many blushing maidens, but they are all different from each other. Stiggins is other than Chadband; and Mr. Pecksniff can never be confounded with Mr. Casby. Each character from that dense crowd not only is unlike any other in the fair, but its distinguishing features are clear and definite. The distinctiveness of Shakespeare's creations has always been insisted upon by his critics as a striking illustration of the inexhaustible fertility of his imagination; but it has long been our opinion that Dickens's conceptions surpass those of our great poet in this important quality as much as they do in number. Certain it is that in the entire range of our noble literature, Shakespeare alone can be for a moment compared with Dickens, as a noble and prolific delineator of human character.

It would be a long task to say all that Dickens has done for the English novel. It would be easier to state what he has not done for it. Indeed the novel of this generation is so completely a work of his *re-creation*, that it would be mere ingratitude backed up by stupidity not to hail him as the immediate parent of it. He took it up when at best it was but a cold imitation of Sir Walter's polite formality and elegant prolixity, and too often was scarce fit for a servants'

hall, in which a fac-simile of Theodore Hook presided as butler. He raised it from its low estate, and made it what it is,—loved and honoured by the wise and good as much as by the simple and unenquiring. He put an end to the hateful calumny of Sir Walter Scott that it was calculated only to amuse ; for he gave it earnestness of purpose—and, as means for arriving at its aim, wit unprecedented, and language such as men had never before listened to. Of all the novelists now figuring in our literature, there is not one who is not largely indebted to him ; and the popular and applauded ones are not few, whose characters, plots, tricks of handling, modes of description, even to the slightest mannerisms of expression, may be immediately traced to him, although their artistic aspirations may be the exact reverse of his elevated and benevolent ones.

To follow Mr. Dickens into his private life, of course we have not presumed. The privacy of the illustrious ought ever to be held sacred ; although perhaps biography would sometimes be more useful to society, were those it treats of still moving in the world. In his written life a hero does not rise from the grave ; his voice is merely an echo from the obscure past—and is little heeded, though while he lived it was always listened to with respect.

Mr. Dickens is a married man, blessed with children, and is the centre of a society, as brilliant and distinguished as ever surrounded a man of letters in London. Every now and then little bits of gossip connected with his doings,—the theatrical entertainments at his house, his journeyings, and his tarryings,—find their way into the public papers, and these scraps of intelligence are read throughout the country with not less avidity than the Royal transactions, on the slopes, recorded by the Court newsman. Fortunately for the public, Mr. Dickens has resolutely declined the numerous solicitations that have been made him to enter

parliament. In the House of Commons he would doubtless be an effective speaker (how the Barnacles *would* like him there!) and would tend not a little to relieve the debates of their tedium and monotony; but then—we should have fewer numbers in green leaves!

CHAPTER XVI.

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

THIS fertile and very popular novelist was born in the year 1805—the same year that gave birth to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. His father was a solicitor of good standing in Manchester, and he himself was educated for the same profession. The allurements of literature made him, however, a careless student of the law, and ere the conclusion of his twenty-first year he presented the world with his first book of fiction, entitled “Sir John Chiverton.” From that time up to the present date, he has been a most industrious author. His principal works are “Rookwood,” “Jack Shepherd,” “Guy Fawkes,” “Crichton,” “James II.,” “The Miser’s Daughter,” “Old St. Paul’s,” “The Tower of London,” “St. James’s,” “Windsor Castle,” “The Lancashire Witches,” “The Star Chamber,” “The Flitch of Bacon,” and “The Spendthrift.” Besides the reputation Mr. Ainsworth has earned by these works, he has a position of importance in the world of literature as the proprietor and editor of the Magazine known as “Ainsworth’s,” the “New Monthly Magazine,” and “Bentley’s Miscellany.” For a brief period in the earlier part of his literary career he was a publisher as well as an author, and doubtless the experience and knowledge he then gained of “the trade,” have materially contributed to his editorial success.

W. D. ARNOLD,

(FIFTY-EIGHTH REGIMENT, B.N.I.)

LIKE his brother Matthew, Mr. W. D. Arnold is a contradiction to the very often repeated, and very silly dictum, "that clever men never have clever sons." It may be questioned whether Dr. Arnold, in planning the future of his sons, would have arranged that one of them should make himself a man of mark by writing a novel; but had he lived to read "Oakfield; or Fellowship in the East," a book better liked in England than in India, we are inclined to think his heart would have experienced a thrill of paternal pride, and he would have recanted some of his severe censure on those frivolous productions called "works of fiction."

Besides "Oakfield," Mr. Arnold has published four lectures under the title of "The Palace of Westminster, and other Historical Sketches."

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

AUTHOR of "The White Hoods," "De Foix," "The Protestant," "Fitz of Fitz-Ford," "The Talba," "Warleigh of the Fatal Oak," "Henry of Pomeroy," "Courtenay of Walreddon," "Trelawny of Trelawne," and "Trials of the Heart," &c. Of the few living writers who are so fortunate as to see their works numbered among the classic literature of the English language, this eminent lady is one. The question of her success has long been decided; with her the struggle for reputation is over, and it is her enviable lot to enjoy honours nobly won and nowhere grudged. A native of Surrey, and the daughter of Mr. John Kempe, a

gentleman of ancient descent and comfortable fortune, she married in 1818, Charles Stothard, the son of the celebrated painter of that name. With taste and enthusiasm for all relating to fine arts, scarcely less decided than her genius for literature, she accompanied her husband in the excursions abroad and at home, which he made in the service of the Antiquarian Society, to which he was historical draughtsman, and she was with him in 1820 in Devonshire, when a fatal accident prevented him from completing, "The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain," and made her a widow after a brief but happy acquaintance with married life. She did not, however, long remain in widowhood. After paying the best possible tribute to the memory of her husband, in completing "The Monumental Effigies," and writing his "Memoirs," she became the wife of the Revd. Edward Atkyns Bray, vicar of Tavistock, in the county of Devonshire. It is since her second marriage that Mrs. Bray has published the novels we have enumerated, and in addition to these "A Life of Thomas Stothard, R.A." and "A Peep at the Pixies," &c., &c.

As a truthful and delicate delineator of character, and an author who is vigorous without ever sacrificing womanly dignity and refinement, Mrs. Bray reminds one of Miss Austin, but she has greater natural endowments and larger stores of learning than the amiable author of "Pride and Prejudice." As a graphic painter of scenery, also, Mrs. Bray has few equals; and many are the young undergraduates who, while belonging to "reading parties" in the pleasant coast villages of Devonshire, have with advantageous results inserted in their money-begging letters to fathers and guardians long passages of local description from "Warleigh," and "Henry de Pomeroy."

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

THIS eminent dramatic author, and contributor to nearly every newspaper and magazine in the United Kingdom, was born in 1816. The best known of his productions for the stage are "The Lowther Arcade," "Our New Governess," and "Honour and Riches." It is only recently that he has exerted his talents as a novelist, but he has, nevertheless, an enviable position amongst our most successful writers of fiction. "Aspen Court," originally published in the pages of Bentley's Miscellany, is justly admired for its spirited style, graphic descriptions of London society, and sustained humour. And the reputation of the author is fully sustained by "The Partners," and "The Gordian Knot."

SELINA BUNBURY.

MISS BUNBURY is an accomplished, pleasant, and industrious writer. For nearly fifteen years she has used her pen, and during that time she has achieved a long list of works—sketches of travel, descriptions of foreign countries, tales for children, and novels—such as no lady, previous to the present century, produced. Lucid in arrangement, thoughtful, abounding in pleasantry, and charming by the freshness and purity of her style, Miss Bunbury won, at the very outset of her career, a popularity which is not likely now to desert her. Her best and most mature novel is "Our Own Story," published in 1856.

WILLIAM CARLETON.

WILLIAM CARLETON, born at Clogher, in 1798, was the son of an Irish peasant, but both his father and mother were gifted above the herd of their class. His father had a remarkable memory for, and a felicitous manner of reciting, old legends and tales of local history; and his mother was respected in the circles she frequented for the thrilling pathos she could throw into "the keene" or death-howl. Her son says, "I have often been present when she has 'raised the keene' over the corpse of some relative or neighbour, and my readers may judge of the melancholy charm which accompanied this expression of her sympathy, when I assure them that the general clamour of violent grief was gradually diminished, from admiration, until it became ultimately hushed, and no voice was heard but her own—wailing in sorrowful but solitary beauty." This agreeable accomplishment doubtless obtained for Mrs. Carleton in her world, much the same kind of *éclat* as surrounds a lady in London society, who is a superior performer on the piano or harp.

Self-educated, ambitious, and with the self-dependence and energy so frequently found in the impulsive and indolent Irish, William Carleton supported himself, even in his boyhood, as a teacher in one of those humble village schools which are found in perfection nowhere out of Ireland. Relinquishing, however, his scholastic duties, when about thirty years of age, he went adventurously to Dublin with his "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry," fairly written out on paper. These excellent tales found a publisher, and appeared in 1830. Their success was complete, and they were in due order followed by the numerous other stories, on which Carleton's deservedly high reputation as a humo-

rist and a writer of deep feeling rests. If the struggles and difficulties of this writer were published, we doubt not they would form a good companion picture to Goldsmith's experiences, as illustrating the trials of a poor Irish author in this century, just as Goldsmith's life gives us the career of one in the last.

But Carleton has been a fortunate man. A few years ago he received a public pension of £200 for his literary services, and immediately on acquiring this independence he emigrated to America, taking his farewell of Great Britain with furious exclamations, in verse, against her "ingratitude." It ever is so. Abuse the Irish peasant, swear at him, beat him, cover him with contumely, and he is ready to allow you to be the most generous-hearted gentleman alive, but do him a substantial service and he will ever after regard you as a tyrant and natural enemy. We doubt not that if Carleton had not received his £200 per annum, he would have died in poverty, without ever having regarded himself as the victim of national ingratitude.

CHORLEY (H. F.)

ALTHOUGH Mr. Chorley is more especially known as a musical critic, and a journalist of the very first class, we cannot afford to omit his name from our necessarily imperfect list of living novelists. His "Sketches of a Seaport Town" appeared in 1834, and they were followed in 1835 by "Conti the Discarded," and in 1845 by "Pomfret; or, Public Opinion and Private Judgment." He also is the author of "Memorials of Mrs. Hemans," "Authors of England," "Modern German Music," and "Music and Manners in France and Germany."

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

THIS lady, a daughter of Mr. Vincent Novello, was born in 1809, and married in 1828 Mr. Charles Cowden Clarke, who is illustrious for his friendships with Lamb, Hazlitt, and Keats. Amongst women she will ever be remarkable, and by admirers of Shakspeare she will ever be respected, for the persevering energy with which she devoted sixteen years of her life to the composition of her "Complete Concordance to Shakspeare." Besides this great task, for which her principal reward we are afraid will be unsubstantial commendation, she published in 1848, "The Adventures of Kit Bam, Mariner;" in 1850, "The Girlhood of Shakspeare's Heroines;" and in 1854, a novel of no ordinary merit, entitled "The Iron Cousin."

RICHARD COBBOLD, M.A. (REV.)

THIS very zealous and kind-hearted clergyman, a native of Ipswich, Suffolk, amongst the traders of which populous and wealthy borough his family have for many years been of importance, is a voluminous and well-meaning writer. He made, we believe, his first appearance as an author thirty years ago, when he published "Valentine Verses," a collection of rhymes and doggrel that were well enough to please a circle of friends in private, but became eminently absurd when offered as an intellectual entertainment to the public. Since that time, Mr. Cobbold has frequently committed himself to the care of publishers, and the tender mercies of critics; so that the list of his productions, in sermons, poems, lectures, and novels, is a long one. His best novel is "The History of Margaret Catchpole; a Suffolk Tale." It is needless to say that the heroine of this

story, was no creation of the author's imagination; in Suffolk she loved her smuggler, scrubbed her bricks, and stole a horse. We should say that Australia could furnish many histories similar to her adventurous one; of the multitudes of young women who made their acquaintance with that country through being sent to the penal settlements, there must be many who have married respectably, and done well, after the termination of their periods of punishment. Still the incidents in the career of Margaret Catchpole were striking and offered an admirable field for the display of a novelist's ingenuity, and Mr. Cobbold made such good use of his materials, that he produced a story, entertaining and impressive, notwithstanding many defects which are attributable rather to the author's imagination, than to his historic fidelity. Compared with "Paul Clifford," "Eugene Aram," and other equally famous biographies of culprits, it is a tedious, but perfectly innocuous book.

Since the appearance of "Margaret Catchpole," Mr. Cobbold has favoured the world with the "History of Mary Ann Wellington," "Courtland," "Freston Tower," "Zenon the Martyr" &c. &c., but these later novels have not sustained the reputation which the history of the "Suffolk Girl" procured for him.

HENRY COKE (THE HON.)

It is long since men and women of rank began to dabble in authorship, *but it is a feature peculiar to the present generation, its being deemed respectable and honourable in them to do so.* When the members of the *beau monde*, first condescended to gratify their vanity by displaying their wit, or want of it, in print, they almost invariably shrouded themselves under some polite fiction of writing to amuse their

own immediate friends, or to form the manners of a beloved son, or else they indemnified themselves for their sense of degradation in using the quill like "the herd of beggarly scribblers," by showering angry impertinences and vulgar contempt on all who were authors by profession—that is for a livelihood. Horace Walpole could never allude to a man of letters sustaining himself by his pen without an expression of disdain. The conduct of the patrons of literature to authors is well exemplified by the neglect and subsequent recognition of Johnson by Lord Chesterfield. Lady Mary Wortley Montague classed hackney writers in the same category with hackney coachmen. And Byron, who at the commencement of his career, had scruples of dignity about receiving money from his publisher, lost much, as Major Pendennis reminded his nephew, in the estimation of society by mixing himself up with literary men.

But now all that is changed. It is generally felt in the highest and most exclusive circles that the reputation of being able to write a smart book, or tell a clever story, is about the best possible trinket, the most graceful plume, with which to adorn wealth and noble lineage. The number of noble or aristocratic authors is daily increasing; season after season they publish their trips to the Mediterranean, missionary excursions to the Pope, pilgrimages to Jerusalem, rambles through the back-woods of Australia, journeyings over Canadian wilds, yacht-voyages in all latitudes, and three-volume novels. Some of these writers are men, some ladies; but fair and stalwart alike, they are proud to avow their connection with the guild of book-makers—and to measure their sport and prowess by the number of royal heads, stamped on good current gold, that they have bagged.

A title is a great thing to go into the bookmarket with. To a writer of fashionable novels—a depicter of high life

upstairs—it is an invaluable possession. The author who can write Lord before his name on the title page is sure of a sale for his work ; the presence of that brief word in that spot is worth more than Dukes and Earls sprinkled broadcast through the rest of the volumes ; it is a guarantee that the descriptions of high life are genuine, a surety that since the imperious countess in the book says to the family solicitor—“now that this business is transacted, you are at liberty to withdraw”—imperious countesses in May-fair and Belgravian palaces, and in moated castles of feudal antiquity, do really and truly so address their legal advisers. Whereas when we take up plain Mr. Brown’s or simple Mr. Robinson’s novel, what security have we (the public) that some ignoble plebeian charlatan (audaciously thinking that at heart and in the marrow of their natures, a merchant’s wife and a peer’s lady are much alike, and that they make love, intrigue, quarrel with their husbands, bully their children, run in debt, and squabble with their friends much in one and the same fashion) is not passing off upon us the miserable ambitions and airs of his trumpery connections, (in fact, connections no better than our own) as those of distinguished, and illustrious, and noble—not to say royal—circles ? Mary-le-bone loves a lord, and when it goes to Mudie’s it has preference for a lord’s book over a commoner’s, and rightly too, for if the book is a good one, Mary-le-bone (who is really a very intelligent creature) is agreeably surprised, and if it is nonsense, as every now and then by some accident a noble author’s book is, still is it not a lord’s nonsense, and of the best style of insipidity ? and in reading it does not Mary-le-bone get a taste of May-fair ?

Of the many gentlemen, members of aristocratic families, who from time to time present the world with a book that can never be said to be really forgotten because it is never altogether heard of, the Honourable Henry Coke is a favourite specimen. In any previous age his novels would

have created a sensation ; but now so plentifully do polished, elegant, and adroit writers abound, they only cause him to be known in the clubs and cliques as a gentleman of refinement, education, pleasant humour, and lively wit ; a reputation that is doubtless an agreeable and useful addition to the *éclat* that surrounds him as the Earl of Liecester's brother.

Mr. Coke's works are "Vienna in 1848," "A Ride over the Rocky Mountains of Oregon and California," "High and Low" a novel, and "A Will and A Way" a novel.

WILKIE COLLINS.

THE distinguished son and biographer of William Collins, R. A., was born in London in 1825. Besides his excellent life of his father he has produced "Antonina, or the Fall of Rome. A Romance of the fifth century," "Rambles beyond Railways," "Bazil ; a story of modern life," "Mr. Wray's Cash Box," "Hide and Seek," and "After Dark," &c. &c. He is also the author of two very remarkable dramas, "The Lighthouse" and "The Frozen Deep," which have been performed several times by Mr. Charles Dickens's amateur theatrical corps. "The Lighthouse" has also been put on the stage with success at the Olympic Theatre.

It is needless to say that Mr. Wilkie Collins is generally regarded as a man of commanding genius, and one destined to occupy a principal place in the republic of letters. For some time past his writings would lead one to think him as morbidly enamoured of the horrible and revolting as Edgar A. Poe, but we believe that in composing his terrible stories of crime and passion he is only passing through a phase of mental existence, that will be followed by the production of far nobler works than any that have as yet come from his pen.

DUDLEY COSTELLO.

THE distinct works of this very delightful writer are, we believe, few in number; but he has been a prolific contributor to some of our best magazines. His "Stories from a Screen," published in 1855, are familiar to all readers of light literature, and though they are widely circulated they are not less widely admired.

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO.

THE literary existence of this lady has been of considerable duration and marked with many honours. The "Songs of a Stranger," were published in 1825, and since then novels, memoirs, and books of travel have come in lavish abundance from her pen. There is often heard a clamour that room ought to be made for female practitioners in the arts monopolized by men; but those who raise it are frequently unaware how many ladies are systematically employed in art, and the higher departments of industrial occupation.

Certainly, in the literature of their country, the women of England have full play and encouragement; and as long as they continue to work in their present style we sincerely trust that they may maintain their footing in the guild of authors.

The best known of this writer's novels are "Catherine de Medicis," "Clara Fane," "Gabrielle," and "The Queen's Prisoner."

GEORGE CROLY, L.L.D.

THE celebrated rector of St. Stephen's with Benet's, Walbrook, was born in Dublin in 1785, and after receiving his education in Trinity College, in that capital, came to London to maintain on this side of the channel the reputation of Irish genius for richness and versatility as a poet, novelist, journalist, dramatic writer, and popular preacher. The "Tales of the Great St. Bernard," "Salathiel," and "Marston," have been so universally read and admired by both gentle and simple, that it would be impertinent here to insist on their author's prominent qualities as a novelist. In politics Dr. Croly has been throughout his long and useful life a consistent and zealous Tory; as a journalist he for many years rendered important services to his party, but the reward he has reaped for his long continued exertions is neglect; the only crumb of preferment that has fallen to his lot, the living of St. Stephen's, was thrown to him from the Whig table. In the pulpit this venerable clergyman is still amongst the most popular and admired of metropolitan preachers.

CATHERINE CROWE.

THIS gifted and accomplished writer was born in Borough Green, county of Kent. Her maiden name, which was Stevens, she relinquished in 1822, on her marriage with Lieutenant-Colonel Crowe. She made her début in literature with the publication of her tragedy, entitled "Aristodemus," which effort at dramatic composition has been followed at intervals by several works of fiction, such as "Manorial Rights," "The Adventures of Susan Hopley," "Lilly Dawson." "The Adventures of a Beauty," "Linny Lockwood," &c. &c. Besides these novels and a capital

tale for children, "Pippie's Warning, or Mind your Tempers," she has translated "The History of a German Clairvoyante," and in her "Night side of Nature," and "Light and Darkness, or Mysteries of Life" has presented materials for endless pleasure to lovers of the vaguely horrible, and those, who feeling there are not enough mysteries in nature's works, find a harmless recreation in imagining marvels and terrors where they do not exist in reality.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

MR. DE QUINCEY has a wide and enviable reputation which, like that of his early friend, Coleridge, is due, rather to the influence he has had on his personal acquaintance, than to his works which, though striking from their originality of thought, and scholarly elegance of style, are not of themselves sufficient to account for the high esteem in which the author of the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," is held by the most enlightened of his own country and Germany. Apart from almost innumerable articles on literature, philosophy, and various subjects intimately connected with the science of political economy, contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and to *Blackwood's*, *Tait's*, and the *London Magazines*, Mr. De Quincey's principal performances are, "The English Opium Eater," "The Logic of Political Economy," "Selections, grave and gay," and a novel entitled "Klosterheim; or the Masque."

Of these works the general reader is most familiar with the "English Opium Eater," a work of which it is impossible to speak without enthusiasm, or to think without fear. It is, in truth, as dangerous as it is fascinating. It was written, we doubt not, with an honest desire to restrain the careless from indulgence in the pernicious drug which in-

siduously charms its victims to destruction ; but its tendency is directly the reverse of such an intention. The rapturous enjoyment derived from the use of the narcotic is so much more fully and forcibly described than the retributive torture, that the reader, at the conclusion of the work, on casting up accounts, and balancing the happiness and the misery, finds the former so decidedly to preponderate, that he lays aside the narrative with a determination to follow, on the slightest temptation, the author's evil courses ; and even the most vivid descriptions of the physical and mental agony and prostration of the opium eater, when he is paying the sharp penalty of his excesses, are so startling and wildly terrible, and take such a strong hold on the imagination, that most persons of exciteable temperaments would rather experience the novelty of such strong sensation, than continue to drag on the burdensome weight, and dull monotony of ordinary existence. Moreover, Mr. De Quincey's individual history is little qualified to deter others from the habit he condemns ; for, in spite of his protracted and excessive indulgence, he has arrived at extreme old age with his commanding intellects unimpaired.

"Klosterheim" is well worthy of perusal. It is by no means a fiction of the first class, or a fair sample of its author's genius ; but it is pleasant reading, and is rendered peculiar by an attention to those traditionary rules for grouping, and "effect," which produce some of the most striking features of modern dramas. Indeed, whilst reading "Klosterheim," we are insensibly conveyed into a theatre, where we find ourselves looking at actors on the boards.

ANNA HARRIET DRURY.

THIS lady, descended from the ancient family of Drury of Suffolk, has conferred lustre on her historic name by her

beautiful writings. In 1847 she published a volume of poetry entitled "Annesley, and other Poems," and from that time up to the present date she has wielded her pen with as much industry as success. Her works of prose fiction are "Friends and Fortune, a Moral Tale," "Eastbury; a Tale," "The Tun by the Sea-side; an allegory," "Light and Shade; or the Young Artist," and "The Blue Ribbons; a story of the last century."

SARAH ELLIS.

THE works of this lady are all of them more or less amusing, and have, perhaps, produced as much animated discussion over tea-cups as the writings of any other living female writer; but the best and most interesting of them would be quite as pleasant and do quite as much good, if they could be freed from the distressing superabundance of small moral purpose under which they labour. Still, their objects are invariably amiable, and the means by which they endeavour to reach them are often very ingenious. We understand that Mrs. Ellis has been not less successful as a schoolmistress than as an author.

Mrs. Ellis, whose maiden name was Stickney, was educated as a member of the Society of Friends. In 1837 she married the Rev. William Ellis, the South Sea Islands Missionary, and author of "Polynesian Researches." Her principal works are "The Women of England;" "The Sons of the Soil;" "Family Secrets;" "The Daughters of England;" "The Wives of England;" "The Mothers of England;" "Pictures of Private Life;" "Look to the End;" "Prevention better than Cure;" "Temper and Temperament;" "Social Distinctions;" "The Bennett's Abroad;" "Rawden House," &c., &c.

STEPHEN WATSON FULLOM.

MR. FULLOM is unquestionably one of the most prominent and successful authors of the day. To a natural facility with his pen, and extensive information on history, classical literature, and the exact sciences, he adds, humour, a discriminating knowledge of mankind, and a practical acquaintance with all that relates to authorcraft as a *business*, that enables him judiciously to select his subjects, and to treat them in a manner best calculated to attract and gratify readers. The consequence of this somewhat rare combination of qualities is that his books are not only well written, but are also well read. Of his powerful novels "The Great Highway," "The Daughter of Night," "The King and the Countess," and "Men of the World," we have not space to speak at length. "The Great Highway" is the best known, having since its first appearance in 1854 passed through five editions. But, perhaps, his reputation, as a man of letters, is derived less from his works of fiction, than from his "Marvels of Science and their testimony to Holy Writ"—a work that obtained for its author the Gold Medal of Honour from the King of Hanover, and of which an eighth edition has been published—and from his learned and entertaining "History of Woman."

L. E. GASKILL.

MRS. GASKILL, author of "Mary Barton," published in 1848, "The Moorland Cottage," "Ruth," "Cranford," "North and South," and the "Life of Charlotte Brontë," is the wife of a much respected Unitarian minister. To pass by this lady and her beautiful works with only a few lines seems much like impertinence, but, unfortunately we

have not space to express at greater length our deep gratitude to her for often rousing us in moments of selfishness or apathy to a healthy sympathy with the desolate and distressed, and our warm admiration for every thing that has come from her pen. With a tender heart, a lively imagination, rare moral courage, high aspirations, and winning simplicity, as well as startling force of diction, Mrs. Gaskell possesses every quality requisite for a novelist of the very highest order. If her "Life of Charlotte Brontë," has a fault, it arises from her making too liberal a use of epistolary documents, and in not relying more on her own unusual gift of nervous and skilful narration. The publication of this life has, it is needless to say, been the source of much pain and unkindly feeling, the expressions of which have in some cases been injudicious and even unmannerly. The friends of the late Revd. Carus Wilson felt themselves aggrieved by the portrait of that gentleman in "Jane Eyre," and the "Biography," and one clergyman took upon himself to declare Charlotte Brontë was guilty of calumniously aspersing a good man in speaking of Mr. Wilson as the victim of spiritual pride. The proof which this Quixotic champion of the Revd. Carus Wilson's spiritual graces adduced in behalf of the accused, was singularly amusing—consisting as it did for the most part of a letter written by an unknown lady, to the effect that *she* had never discovered anything like Pharisaical arrogance in Mr. Wilson, and that *she* thought Miss Brontë was altogether wrong. It never struck the sagacious counsel that by this step he did not clear the character of his protégé, but only put the blindness and insensibility of one lady in opposition to the accurate observation of another, who was not only peculiarly gifted with a power of reading character, but whose acute sufferings bore witness to the correctness of her opinions. By the same reasoning it could be shown that Uncle Tom could not have been flogged to death because black

Sambo had never received a lash ; or that a certain English King never died of eating lampreys, because his chief minister never eat any ; or that A could not have died of small pox, because B had never been vaccinated.

GEORGE ROBERT GLEIG—THE REV.

At one time the novelist was looked on with distrust in every rank of society, and while the zealously devout did not hesitate to call him "a child of Belial," and a host of other unpleasant names, even the charitable deemed him a representative of worldly-mindedness. Indeed, in certain obscure sects, the writer of prose fiction still retains this vague, fabulous, reputation of wickedness ; and only the other day the writer of these pages was not a little amused with reading a broad-side posted on a wall by some society for the promulgation of the Christian virtues, which warned all good people to avoid the company of "play-actors, infidels, scoffers, novelists, *and all other followers of impious callings.*" This evil fame, however, must, in these days, be fast dying out, even amongst the flocks presided over by Chadbands and Stigginses, when the most zealous and effective of our clergy are found amongst the ranks of novelists.

The Rev. George Gleig, the son of a Scottish bishop, was born in 1796, and after being educated at Oxford, entered the army as an officer of the 85th Regiment of Light Infantry. He served in the Peninsula, and in the campaign of Washington, being severely wounded at the taking of that city. Retiring from the service on half-pay, he was ordained, and in 1822 he was presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the living of Ivy Church, Kent. In 1844 he obtained the chaplaincy of Chelsea Hospital. In 1846

he was made Chaplain-General to the forces, and he has been also appointed Inspector-General of Military Schools.

Mr. Gleig's most important contributions to literature are, "The Subaltern," "Campaigns at Washington and New Orleans," "Chronicles of Waltham," "The Country Curate," "History of England," "Germany Visited," "The Hussar," "The Military History of Great Britain," "The Soldier's Help to Divine Truth," "Things Old and New," "The Chelsea Veterans," and "Two volumes of Sermons."

CATHERINE GRACE GORE.

THE pen of this brilliant woman is as ready and productive as her wit is sparkling, her satire delicate, and her imagination lively. It does not detract from her merit to say that her positively innumerable characters are all taken from the same small school, and are representatives of the surface manners of a not-all-important class rather than of society at large. Mrs. Gore is, by birth, education, and position, a member of the polite and contracted world she has so frequently sketched; she is a woman of fashion,—balls, routs, operas, flirtations at German Spas, pleasure-hunting in Paris, have been both the amusements and serious occupations of her existence; in the retirement of home she has not breathed the free air of a country common, and had the half-clad paupers of a rural parish to tend as clients,—her domestic seclusion has been found in the perfumed luxury of a West-end boudoir, and the only urgent calls made on her charity have come from the secretaries of humanitarian societies. In these times, then, when there is so loud a clamour for sincerity in the artist, is not Mrs. Gore to be respected for exercising her fascinating powers of description in talking that which she sees and knows—

and for refraining from any attempt to paint scenes which, though they may be healthier than any in the life of her experience, she is personally unacquainted with? It is true that she has devoted herself to the delineation of a world of polite manners, decorous selfishness, mean ambitions, and elegant frivolities—a world little calculated to improve those who breathe its dangerous atmosphere either in reality or through the medium of books; but the questions to be put are:—is she veracious? and in what style does she perform her task? Of her truthfulness we think her popularity and reputation for fidelity with readers of the class she portrays are sufficient proof. It may indeed be objected that in the circles of high life there is not an everlasting cannonade of epigrammatic wit, any more than in the homelier drawing-rooms of St. John's Wood and Bloomsbury, and that the roseate splendours with which Mrs. Gore brightens her interiors of Almacks, and ducal entertainments, no more characterize the balls of May-fair and Belgravia, than those of the Mansion House. But the fact of the pictures being acceptable to fashionable readers shows that, though they may not describe the *beau monde* as it is, they not the less describe it as it would be, and erring only on the side of flattery depict “the ideal” and call it “the actual.” As to the second question—of the style in which Mrs. Gore tells her stories, it would be difficult to be too eulogistic; it is here that her genius especially proclaims itself; in her narratives she scatters broadcast a wealth of humorous allusion, covert satire, and brief aphorisms of worldly philosophy, with a profusion that no writer can indulge in or command who is not elated with a consciousness of almost inexhaustible resources. She never tires; the dullest of her pages are amusing, and charm by their freshness and vivacity; and her most sober chapters have the same exhilarating effect that we experience when listening to the idle badinage of a clever and brilliant talker.

Mrs. Gore was born at the close of the last century ; and her literary career commenced in 1823, soon after her marriage, with the publication of "Theresa Marchmont, or the Maid of Honour." Since that time, she has produced upwards of sixty works ; and yet she has never sunk into tediousness, or deserved censure for writing too much. The work that more than any other contributed to the establishment of her enviable reputation is "Cecil, or the Adventures of a Coxcomb."

JAMES GRANT.

THIS gentleman (who is not to be confounded with Mr. James Grant the editor of the "Morning Advertiser," but is to be distinguished as Mr. James Grant *of the 62nd Regiment*), has written many dashing stories, and has a quick, lively, fiery pen, capable of great achievements ; but, unfortunately his object is to supply the booksellers with quantity rather than the public with good quality. Two novels a year is his average ; he is very moderate and forbearing not to publish twice as much. Still the author of the "Adventures of an Aide-de-Camp," "Harry Ogilvie," "Jane Seton ; or the King's Advocate," "The Romance of War, or the Highlands in Spain," and the "Scottish Cavalier," deserves our respect and gratitude.

THOMAS COLLY GRATTAN.

IRELAND has supplied her share of good novelists to literature, and few of them deserve higher praise than Mr. Grattan. A man of the world, as Irish authors usually are, and one whose early years were spent in a state of semi-

vagrancy between the legal and military professions, with a lively imagination and a truly Hibernian love of adventure, the author of "Highways and Byeways," in three series, the "Heiress of Bruges," "Jacqueline of Holland," and other works, has given the world some tales of lively description, which, in spite of their carelessness of construction, will long remain favourites with novel-readers.

Mr. Grattan was born in Dublin, in 1796, and has principally resided abroad. In 1839, he was appointed British Consul to the states of Massachusetts, and retained that post until in 1853 he was permitted to resign it in favour of his son. In early life he was in the army, but the battle of Waterloo and the conclusion of war, before he could join his regiment abroad, prevented his seeing active service.

ANNA MARIA HALL.

THIS very beautiful and womanly writer lives in the affections of thousands. Of Irish birth, she has given us tales illustrative of Irish character, which are unequalled in the entire range of our literature, for while they preserve with fidelity the grotesque humour, the faults, and the amiable traits of the Irish peasantry, they are altogether free from political venom and party rancour. Indeed, there is no taint of sectarianism in any of Mrs. Hall's writings, though many of them are on subjects that would compel its betrayal if any leaven of bitterness lurked in her heart. She is as remarkable for her enlarged views on social questions as for womanly sensibility and commanding intelligence.

She is of an old Wexford family named Fielding, and in that county she first saw the light. Her first work, "Sketches of Irish Character," appeared in 1829; since

which time she has presented the world with "Chronicles of a School-room," "The Buccaneer," "Tales of Woman's Trials," "The Outlaw," "Lights and Shadows of Irish Character," "The Groves of Blarney," "Marian, or a Young Maid's Trials," "The Whiteboy," "Midsummer Eve," "Stories of the Governess," &c., &c., &c.

JAMES HANNAY.

AMONGST the band of young writers who are steadily advancing in artistic power, and are yearly becoming more and more the favourites of the public, Mr. Hannay has a prominent place. A cadet of the ancient and honourable house of "Hannay of Sorbie," he was born in the year 1827, at Dumfries, where his family have long been of leading influence and position. Like the late Douglas Jerrold, and many other of our most distinguished authors, he passed the years, immediately succeeding emancipation from school, in the Royal Navy. In 1840, while a midshipman on board H.M.S. Cambridge, he took part in the Syrian operations, and it was not till 1845 that he quitted the service for the more congenial profession of literature.

Mr. Hannay is now thirty-one years of age, and he has for twelve years resided in London, using his pen with unflagging industry. His novel, entitled "Singleton Fontenoy," immediately on its appearance, created for him a reputation, and placed him in public estimation in the first rank of "naval novelists." This successful fiction, which has had an immense sale, was followed by the publication of a series of lectures on "Satire and Satirists," which were delivered in London, during the summer of 1853. In 1855 appeared his last novel, "Eustace Conyers," which has all the poignant wit and literary merit of "Singleton Fon-

tenoy," and in addition is rich in those excellences of thought and style which are rarely, if ever, found in the writings of so young a man. In Germany, "Eustace Conyers," immediately on its translation, met with even a warmer reception than in this country.

Though Mr. Hannay has produced these separate works, his principal literary labours have been in the metropolitan journals, such as "Punch," and "The Athenæum," and in the pages of the "Quarterly" and "Westminster" magazines, and for a long time he has been the chief political writer in one of the best of the weekly papers of London. The numerous sketches which he dashed off for different periodicals during his literary noviciate, and many of which have been collected and re-published, the reader of general literature is well acquainted with.

At the last general election Mr. Hannay solicited the suffrages of the inhabitants of his native town in opposition to Mr. Ewart, who eventually was re-elected M.P. for the Dumfries district of Burghs. Though the result of his candidature was not success, still Mr. Hannay obtained so large a minority of votes, and created so favourable an impression on the entire constituency, by his remarkably graceful and powerful eloquence, and by the courage with which he honestly declared the *whole* of his political creed, that it is more than probable that we may, ere many years, see him member for the "district." In such a case, the House of Commons would have its present dearth of eloquence relieved by an effective orator, and a lively wit.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

THIS popular author, whose "History of Priestcraft," on its first appearance, produced perhaps a greater impression on religionists than any other work of the kind, written in

the present century, was born in 1795, at Heanor in Derbyshire. Mr. Howitt is, and from his infancy was bred, a Quaker, but the cold formality and austere manners of the school to which he belongs, and in which he was reared, have not chilled the warmth of his generous nature, or placed any fetters on his active intelligence. Gentle as Bernard Barton, but far superior to that poet in vigour and determination of character, he is justly regarded with pride and affection by the Society of Friends as a manly representative of their best qualities. Of all his many works, none are more widely admired than "The Hall and the Hamlet," a novel published in 1847, and "Madame Dorrington of the Dene," published in 1851.

MARY HOWITT.

THE wife of William Howitt is inseparably connected in reputation with the literary career of her husband. Her girlish poems, handed about in manuscript for the amusement of her friends and neighbours, were her first introduction to the poet destined to become her husband, who, it is said, was so delighted with the genius displayed in them, that he did not rest till he formed the acquaintance of their author. Like her husband, Mrs. Howitt was reared and educated by Quakers, and as a girl was forbidden to gratify her longing for imaginative literature; but temptation was too strong for her—the commands of her father were disobeyed, and clandestinely she studied all the "light frivolous story books" that the libraries in the neighbourhood contained. It was only to be expected that a child capable of so transgressing the rules of the gentle "Friends," would as a woman yet farther shock their tenderest prejudices. Besides her poems, which are to be found in nearly every well

furnished library, and her numerous productions for children, which—a rare thing in children's books—are very popular with the little people they were intended to interest, Mrs. Howitt is the author of that most agreeable novel, "Wood Leighton." But, excellent as her original compositions are, the most valuable contributions she has made to our standard literature are her faithful and spirited translations of Miss Bremer and Hans Christian Andersen. It is a startling proof of her mental vigour and her perseverance, that she actually acquired the language of each of these charming writers for the express purpose of making them known to the English public.

MRS. HUBBACK.

THIS lady is well-known and highly esteemed as a writer ; for her novels are in themselves good, and they have additional interest as coming from the niece of Miss Austin. It is true that Miss Austin's works are as generally neglected as they are universally eulogized, and that, instead of reading them in private and condemning them in public, most people do *not* peruse them in the closet or anywhere else, and yet make a point of praising them in the drawing-room. Still it is not less the fact that her name and genius, though not popular, are generally approved, and that the consequences of this singular regard have been most beneficial to Mrs. Hubback in literature. Mrs. Hubback has been and promises to be the most prolific creator of novels, for we believe that "The Younger Sister," "The Wife's Sister," "The Rival Suitors," "The Old Vicarage," "May and December," "Malvern," "Life and its Lessons," and "Agnes Milbourne," are not all the fictions which have proceeded from her pen since the commencement of 1850.

LEIGH HUNT.

LEIGH HUNT, the friend and school-fellow of Lamb and Coleridge, and the associate of Byron, was born at Southgate in Middlesex, on the 19th of October, 1784. His father, a clergyman of the Church of England, was a West Indian, and his mother was a Philadelphian. At the time of the American War Mr. Hunt, who was an ardent Royalist, had so imprudently displayed his political zeal that he was compelled to fly for safety to England. The long story of Leigh Hunt's literary struggles—the contemptible persecution he underwent at the hands of government while editor of the "Examiner," his imprisonment for wounding the personal vanity of the poor prince-regent, his ill-starred connection with Lord Byron, and all the other "points" of interest in his career—must be looked for in the pages of his "Autobiography;" for we only make cursory mention of the venerable and classic poet to thank him for his delightful contribution to our standard novels in the tale of "Sir Ralph Esher."

Mr. Leigh Hunt has for some years enjoyed a pension from the Civil List of £200.

GEORGE PAYNE RAINSFORD JAMES.

THIS gentleman was born at the opening of the present century, and is therefore to be ranked amongst the veterans of the present generation of novelists. So morbidly prolific has been the pen of this eminent and very ready writer, that the bare enumeration of his works would occupy more space than we can spare. Born in London, and educated in opulent circumstances, he did not turn to the

profession of literature in the first instance as a means of livelihood, but as a field for amusement. His first work of magnitude, "Richelieu," was published in 1828, and met with great success.

It is not necessary here to state that Mr. James is a writer far above the common herd, that his works display an unusual knowledge of human nature, and an intimate acquaintance with certain passages of history, and that in some instances they are remarkable for dramatic power and ingenuity of plot. But unfortunately Mr. James has been so afflicted with the *cacoethes scribendi* that he has not given so much time to study and reflection as to the work of mere composition. With mental endowments far above the ordinary standard, he might have ranked high amongst pleasant and instructive writers; but as it is, the praise that is his due is not generally allowed him, and he is usually spoken of only as a remarkably productive and equally tedious author. Love of writing may degenerate into a habit of scribbling, just as a natural gift of oratory may sink into a habit of prating.

A few years since Mr. James was appointed British Consul for the State of Massachusetts; and there, in Berkshire county, he still resides with his family, performing the duties of his office.

W. BLANCHARD JERROLD.

THE mention of this gentleman brings to our minds the names of two men of remarkable genius, whose memory is cherished with affection and admiration by all who have any acquaintance with English literature. The names of Blanchard and Jerrold suggest the most pleasant thoughts of subtle humour and poignant wit; and in the person of the

subject of this necessarily brief notice, there is no danger of their calling up less agreeable associations. As a journalist, essayist, novelist, and dramatic writer, Mr. Blanchard Jerrold has now been many years before the world, and in all the various subjects he has handled, there is not one in which he has not displayed himself a worthy son of his celebrated father. His "Imperial Paris," not less than Mr. Bayle St. John's "Purple Tints," is an illustration, not a little flattering to our national vanity, of the justice and discrimination with which Englishmen examine the character and institutions of the French, who, in their judgment of us, still retain the ignorance and prejudices of past generations.

One of the earliest works of Mr. Jerrold was a novel called "The Disgrace of the Family," which attracted much attention at the time of its first appearance in 1848.

GERALDINE E. JEWSBURY.

LIKE Mrs. Gaskell, Miss Jewsbury, one of the most impassioned of our prose poets, is an inhabitant of that city which loudly abusive politicians delight to represent as the peculiar seat of mammon-worship and sordid ambition. A sister of the gifted author of the "Three Histories," Miss Jewsbury has produced several works of imagination, which entitle her to a high rank amongst the *many* female writers, whose rare endowments and varied powers are amongst the most striking intellectual phenomena of our time. Her first work, "Zöe, or the History of Two Lives," appeared in 1845, and has been followed by "The Half Sisters," "Marian Withers," "The History of an Adopted Child," and "Constance Herbert."

JULIA KAVANAGH.

THE most careless reader who has turned over these volumes must have been struck with the large number of novelists which Ireland has furnished; and of them not many have earned a wider or more justly merited popularity than Miss Kavanagh. She commenced her literary career something more than ten years since, and has produced several tales, and novels, as well as two biographical works entitled "Women of Christianity," and "Women in France of the Eighteenth Century." Of her works of fiction we may mention "Madeleine," "Nathalie," "Daisy Burns," "Grace Lee," and "Rachel Gray."

Miss Kavanagh was born in 1824, at Thurles, county Tipperary, and is on both sides of respectable descent.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE vigorous intellect and generous heart of this great novelist, true poet, and zealous clergyman, are familiar to readers of every class of society. His "Village Sermons" are "household words," and are to be found set apart with the Sacred Scriptures in the cottages of our peasantry. Scholars have read with delight and improvement "Hypatia," and "The Schools of Alexandria," and philosophers and statesmen, not less than hard-worked operatives and idle skimmers of every novel that finds its way into three volumes, have been startled and compelled to both thought and action by the vivid descriptions, new views, earnest appeals to generous exertion, and manly denunciations of selfishness and sloth, contained in "Alton Locke," "Yeast,"

"Westward Ho," and "Two Years Ago." The literary clergyman is a common sight; popular preachers who occupy their spare hours with composing fashionable novels for May-fair, and pulpit orators of sectarian animosities who flood the world of their admirers with endless thousands of silly tracts, are plentiful indeed; but a clergyman who, like Mr. Kingsley, without ever degrading his sacred office to serve the purposes of an advertisement, or ever for a moment forgetting the solemn duties of his calling, uses literature as a means of instructing and elevating his fellow men, is a rare spectacle.

The Rev. Charles Kingsley, Rector of Eversley, Hants, and Honorary Canon of Middleham, was born at a village in Devonshire, on the borders of Dartmoor, in June, 1819. He is therefore now at an age when the mental powers are usually in their perfection. After receiving a good preliminary education at King's College, London, Mr. Kingsley entered the society of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and terminated his undergraduate career by gaining the honours of a *senior optime*, and a first-class man in the Classical Tripos. After devoting a short time to the study of the law, with the intention of going to the bar, he was ordained to the curacy of Eversley, and the living of that parish becoming vacant within two years after his ordination, the patron, the late Sir John Cope, Baronet, presented him to it.

Mr. Kingsley is one of the most productive writers of his age, and if he continue to publish at the same rate as he has during the last twelve years, he will, ere long, become a more voluminous writer than Mr. James. In the British Museum catalogue are mentioned *eighteen* publications from his pen, the first of which appeared in 1845. But as yet there are no signs of his over-writing himself. The same fresh wit, sturdy humour, pure and nervous English style, copious learning, delicate knowledge of character, and

positively miraculous power for painting natural scenery, that were so universally admired in "Alton Locke," and "Hypatia," are found in "Two Years Ago."

CHARLES JAMES LEVER.

THE author of "Harry Lorrequer," "Charles O'Malley," "Jack Hinton," "Our Mess," "The O'Donaghue," "The Commissioner," "St. Patrick's Eve," "Roland Cashel," "The Knight of Gwynne," "The Daltons," "The Dodd Family Abroad," "The Fortunes of Glencore," &c. &c., was born in Dublin on the 31st of August, 1806. His father was a substantial and prosperous architect of that capital. The author commenced life as a medical practitioner, and it was while he filled the post of physician to the Embassy at Brussels that he published "Harry Lorrequer," in numbers. The well-merited success of this book made him a literary celebrity, and his subsequent labours have sustained his high reputation, notwithstanding the falling-off in humour and strength of some of his latest productions. Mr. Lever has made a school of his own, and has retained the leadership of it. He is the gay and light-hearted captain of those jolly rollicking novelists who delight in fox-hunting, horse-racing, deep drinking, loud singing, late dancing, jaunty duels, reckless flirtations, insolvency, blazes and pistol practice. And who like Mr. Lever, unless it be Mr. Frank Smedley, can leap a vicious horse over a yawning chasm or a brick wall, twelve feet high, or carry away an heiress from a thousand rivals, or squander an estate in the character of a jolly good fellow, or shoot a friend dead with perfect *sang froid*, or spit down a Frenchman's throat? Such are the incidents, and such the tone of Lever's best novels, which unquestionably are in their way indescribably amusing, and laughter-provoking books. Mr. Lever has laid all Irishmen under a deep debt of gratitude;

for the effect of his descriptions of their humour and high courage has been to create amongst all classes of English society, a cordial good-will to every member of the Irish nation such as never before existed on this side of the channel. Another not less valuable consequence of the jovial rattling fictions is the military ambition they have fostered in the minds of our youth during the long term of European peace that preceded the Crimean war.

In 1842, Mr. Lever undertook the management of the "Dublin University Magazine," but he did not long continue in the post of editor of that excellent periodical. In 1845 he returned to the Continent, and since that time has resided principally at Florence.

G. H. LEWES.

THOUGH Mr. Lewes is better known to the world as a biographer, and perhaps the best philosophical and critical essayist now living, he is the author of at least two excellent novels, "Ranthorpe" and "Rose, Blanche, and Violet."

Born in London in 1817, the biographer of Goethe was educated in part abroad, and partly by Dr. Burney at Greenwich. On completing the education of boyhood, he entered a Russian merchant's office as a clerk; but displeased with the prospect of a career of commercial industry he exchanged the accountant's pen for the scalpel, and for some time directed his powers to the study of medicine. Unable, however, to endure the sight of surgical operations, he withdrew himself from the hospitals, and going to Germany passed two years in carefully preparing himself for the literary profession. Immediately on his return to London his pen made known its capabilities; and from that time his never flagging wit and commanding endowments have

given him a foremost place amongst our writers. His conversational powers are as remarkable as his purely literary endowments, the keenness of his observation, the poetic fervour of his nature, and the force of his satire being no less apparent in his spoken than his written words.

Besides his novels and his "Life of Goethe," he has published "A Biographical History of Philosophy," "The Spanish Drama: Lope de Vega and Calderon," a "Life of Robespierre," "The Noble Heart," a tragedy, and "Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences." The "Edinburgh," "Westminster," "Foreign Quarterly," "British and Foreign," and "British Quarterly" reviews, and "Blackwood's" and "Frazer's" magazines have been largely contributed to by him.

SAMUEL LOVER.

THE varied talents of Mr. Lover are familiar to all who care for music or mirth. Indeed few of our living celebrities are more generally known and admired than the author of "Rory O'More," "He would be a Gentleman, or Treasure Trove," and the "Confessions of Con Cregan." Of the goodness of these novels it is needless to speak, for they have long since taken secure places in our standard literature.

CHARLES MACKAY.

THIS poet, who may emphatically be called the lyric poet of the people, was born in Perth, in 1812, but his childhood was spent in London; and in London he has lived, and thought, and written. In 1834, he made his *début* in literature with a volume of poems, which immediately attracted public attention, and secured for him a place on the "Morning Chronicle," then edited by John Black. In

1844, he became the editor of the "Glasgow Argus," but he conducted that journal for only about three years. During his short residence in Glasgow, however, the University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Besides his "Voices from the Crowd," "Voices from the Mountains," "Town Lyrics," "Egeria," "Under Green Leaves," and other poems, Dr. Mackay has written an excellent historical novel, first published in 1841, entitled "Longbeard ; or, the Revolt of the Saxons."

ANNE MARSH.

OF late years, Mrs. Marsh's pen has been very prolific, but each succeeding work has tended to heighten her reputation, and widen the circle of her admirers. The daughter of James Caldwell, Esq., a gentleman of considerable landed estate, and recorder of Newcastle-under-Lyne, and the wife of the junior partner of that unfortunate and notorious banking-house "Fauntleroy, Graham, Stracey, and Marsh," Mrs. Marsh spent her earlier years in the privacy and retirement, the giving up of which is a cruel part of the heavy price paid by ladies for celebrity. She was born in the last century, but it was not till 1834 that she published her first beautiful work—"Two Old Men's Tales." These delightful stories have been followed by "Tales of the Woods and Fields," "Triumphs of Time," "Mount Sorel," "Emilia Wyndham," "Father Darcy," "Norman Bridge," "Angela," "Mordaunt Hall," "Lettice Arnold," "The Wilmingtons," "Time the Avenger," "Ravenscliffe," "Castle Avon," "Aubrey," and "The Heiress of Haughton," &c., &c. Besides these works of fiction, which differ in degree of excellence, but are all worthy of ranking amongst our very best standard novels, Mrs. Marsh is the author of "The Protestant Reformation in France."

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

THE position of this lady is in every respect a remarkable one; the difficulties she has encountered, the prodigious influence she has exercised on her times, the courage with which she has enforced her opinions on politics and religion, and the edifying firmness she has displayed in making her practice, under circumstances of great trial, accord with her principles are alike uncommon. She has surpassed most men of high mental endowments in the study and illustration of a science, the consideration of which demands all the energy, and all the faculty of continued thought, which are supposed to be the principal characteristics of masculine intellect; yet she has aroused in them no bitterness of rivalry, no humiliating sense of defeat;—men are her warmest admirers. She is no favourite with women; nor is this to be wondered at—for she has no womanly weaknesses, has startled somnolent orthodoxy, and has received general homage as pre-eminently the foremost of her sex. We will not attribute it to jealousy; but women never cordially love a woman remarkable either for beauty or intellect; they often assert with vehemence the mental equality of the sexes, but they do not care to illustrate their general position by particular instances, and they acrimoniously resent the license of him who dares to support their arguments with an example taken from their ranks. It is amusing to hear ladies who ride boldly in the hunting-field condemning Miss Martineau for having mounted a camel; and to listen to English gentlewomen, who bag a hundred head of game in the shooting-season, speak with censorious pity of the bad taste a woman displays in writing about politics.

Miss Martineau's family was originally of French extraction, and settled in Norwich on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Her father was a trader of that city, who in his path through life had more children than pros-

perity, for he met with disasters in business, and she was the youngest of a family of eight children, of whom the Rev. James Martineau was her favourite brother.

Born in 1802, Harriet Martineau had a childhood darkened by physical suffering. She was very delicate, was afflicted with a partial deafness, which rendered her a tiresome companion, and she has never, save for a few hours, enjoyed the sense of smell. Perhaps her feeble health and bodily ailments—cutting her off from many of the amusements of association, and compelling her to be self-dependent for happiness—contributed not a little to the fortitude of her character.

She was only a girl when she commenced writing—at first as a pastime, but soon from necessity, and with the resolve to make authorship the grave business of her life. In 1823 appeared her “Devotional Exercises for the use of Young Persons,” and this production was rapidly followed by “Christmas Day,” “The Friend,” “Principle and Practice,” “The Rioters,” “Mary Campbell,” “The Turn Out,” “My Servant Rachel,” &c., &c. In 1831 she published “Traditions of Palestine,” and about the same time appeared her three prize essays, “The Faith as Unfolded by Many Prophets,” “Providence as manifested through Israel,” and “The Essential Faith of the Universal Church,” treatises highly esteemed by Unitarians. In due course followed the “Illustrations of Political Economy,” which were speedily translated into German and French, and, having made their author famous, were succeeded in due course by “Illustrations of Taxation,” and “Poor-Law and Paupers.” In 1837 she published “Society in America;” and in 1839 appeared her first tale, long enough to be called a novel, “Deerbrook,” which was succeeded by “The Hour and the Man.” She next sent forth some excellent tales for children, such as “The Playfellow,” “The Settlers at Home,” “The Peasant and the Prince,” “Feats on the

Fiord," and "The Crofton Boys." In 1843, she published "Life in a Sick Room," the charming result of long years of dangerous suffering. On her recovery from this tedious illness, she produced "Forest and Game-Law Tales," and "The Billow and the Rock." "Eastern Life, Past and Present," containing the impressions made on her mind during her Eastern expedition; a condensation of Comte's "Positive Philosophy," "The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace," "Household Education," and a "Complete Guide to the Lakes," complete the list of her more celebrated writings. But, in estimating Miss Martineau's industry and usefulness as an author, it must be borne in mind that she has for years been a contributor to magazines, and has been a principal writer of "leaders" on an important London daily paper.

Twice has Miss Martineau been offered a pension by Government, but she has declined the liberal advances on the grounds of conscientious scruples to benefitting by the taxation of the community. At the time of her second refusal to become a recipient of public bounty she was in great pecuniary trouble. Her noble exertions have, however, secured to her an easy competence, and she has for many years resided on her farm near Ambleside.

As a novelist, Miss Martineau has not hesitated to express her deep interest in the honour and good government of her country, and the well-being of her fellow-creatures—a course of conduct, in the opinion of the "Edinburgh Review," warmly to be reprehended.

EMILIA MARRYAT.

IN entering on the field of literary exertion, in which her father had borne so conspicuous and triumphant a part, Miss Marryat acted with no ordinary courage: but her prudence was not less than her self-confidence, for in

"Temper : a Tale," published in 1854, and "Henry Lyle, or, Life and Existence," published in 1856, we detect many of the excellences which won for Captain Marryat his popularity and renown as a writer.

WILLIAM HAMILTON MAXWELL.

MR. Maxwell is to soldiers what Captain Marryat was to sailors. It is to him that military men, and all who feel interest in the pursuits and tenour of a soldier's life, look for tales of martial adventure, camp experience, the fun and boredom of barracks, and the heroism and excitement of a battle-field. For many years Mr. Maxwell has used his pen most industriously, infusing into his stories a spirit of generosity and gallant resolve, calculated to foster in the breasts of his particular admirers the frankness, and courage, and elastic hopefulness which have long distinguished English soldiers. The favourites in public esteem of Mr. Maxwell's numerous works are "The Bivouac," "Hector O'Halloran," "Stories of Waterloo," "Dark Lady of Doona," "Brian O'Linn," and "Wild Sports of the West."

MAYHEW.

To make mention of any one of the brothers Mayhew, without saying something that immediately relates to another of them, is almost impossible. A firmly united band they have all distinguished themselves in literature, but have almost always proceeded in their undertakings on a system of co-operation, the result of which is, that they constitute a domestic group posed and ready for the artist, and can hardly be treated as separate subjects. Augustus helps Horace, Horace helps Henry, Henry works with Augustus, Augustus takes part with Edward. Mr. Horace Mayhew

has written the history of "Model Men;" we should think he and his brothers might serve as studies for a new work to be called, "The Model Brothers." As members of the ignorant and far-removed public, we feel no slight curiosity as to the mutual relations in private life of this staunch fraternity—this happy family of literature! It is difficult to imagine that with so loving a front to the world, they squabble and fight in the background like all the brothers of our own acquaintance.

Without a doubt, the debt due from the English public to the Mayhews for amusement of the highest order is a heavy one; and the future historian who looks for the picture of the social life of this generation in its current literature, will respect them as foremost for genius and success amongst the authors of their day. Henry Mayhew was the originator of "Punch," and to his inspiration in the earlier years of his career must be attributed much of the present excellence of that paper, which we believe is more firmly fixed in the good-will of Englishmen than any other organ of journalism. Henry Mayhew also has rendered valuable service to society in his "London Labour and the Poor;" a work of noble design, that will stand forth to posterity as a memorable example of philanthropic labour undertaken by a private individual, that ought long before to have been performed by government. By these two achievements, "Punch," and the inquiry into the condition of the "London Poor," the name of Mayhew will for many years be honourably distinguished. But it has other titles to celebrity. Mr. Thomas Mayhew, in starting the "Penny National Library," originated a movement which has brought a large proportion of our most valuable literature within the reach of a working man of slender means. Horace Mayhew, besides having enriched the pages of "Punch" without intermission, from the time of its first appearance up to the present date, has either by himself, or

in conjunction with one of his brothers, produced a series of tales, farces, and humorous brochures that are read everywhere, and admired by everyone. What lady, who has an establishment to preside over, has not read "The Greatest Plague of Life?" The "Letters left at the Pastry Cook's" are to be found in every house not closed against the "Pickwick Papers," and "Household Words." And only recently has been published "Paved with Gold," a work which will ably sustain the popularity of the Brothers Mayhew.

G. J. WHYTE MELVILLE.

AMONGST the rising of our younger novelists, this gentleman is favourably known, and the strength and ease of his style justify the belief entertained by many that he is destined to win the highest honour the profession of literature can offer. For some time he has been the principal writer of fiction in the pages of Fraser, and he is well deserving of such employment. Perhaps he is somewhat an imitator of Thackeray; but it is difficult for an artist to admire a great master and not follow in his steps. It may be advanced, also, that in his choice of subjects, and his way of handling them, Mr. Melville does not display much originality; but then it cannot be denied that in his writings he is always a lively, accomplished, entertaining, and most gentlemanly companion. His excellent and justly popular works of imagination are "Digby Grand," "Kate Coventry," "General Bounce," and "The Interpreter."

THOMAS MILLER.

THIS agreeable and fertile author first become known as a poet and a prose-writer of no ordinary power, while he

was employed in the humble calling of a basket-maker. He was born on the 31st of August, 1809, in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire; he is, therefore, still of an age when the mental faculties rather increase than wane, and the marked improvement of his style, with each new production of his pen, encourages us to look for even better things from him than his unquestionable talents have as yet favoured us with.

His principal fictitious works are "Royston Gower," 1838; "Fair Rosamond, or the days of King Henry II.;" "Lady Jane Grey, an Historical Romance;" "Gideon Giles, the Roper;" "Godfrey Malvern, or the Life of an Author," and "Fred Holdersworth." Besides these works and numerous books for children, as well as poems, Mr. Miller has contributed largely to periodicals and newspapers.

JOHN MILLS.

As soon as English gentlemen began to care for intellectual pleasures, as well as field sports, a class of writers sprung up whose business it has been to describe the virtues and faults, and peculiarities of horses, dogs, and all the animals that contribute to the animation of the hunting-field and the race-course. How well these artists have performed their task, it is needless to say; for so forcibly have they displayed the charms of our truly national amusements, and such a halo of poetry have they thrown around the sportsman's life, that some of the most fascinating and inspiring scenes fictitious literature has presented us with, are those bold dashing pictures of cross-country gallops and break-neck leaps, which abound in the pages of Mills, Lever, and the excellent author of "Handley Cross." We believe that the "horsey and houndey school," as it has been termed, has done good service to our national

character, as well as to literature. During the dynasty of the renowned Mr. Brummel, who exerted all his influence (and perhaps beneficially) to shame men of rank out of an over-weaning fondness for the pursuits of the stable, a fashion set in unfairly to depreciate the manly exercises of country gentlemen, and to throw ridicule on enthusiastic lovers of hunting. This was only a natural re-action from the coarseness and insufferable vulgarities of those noble leaders of sporting circles, who persisted in wearing top-boots on all occasions, and in interlarding their ordinary conversation with the oaths and slang of grooms and jockeys, and who even had holes punched or drilled through their eye-teeth, so as to enable them to whistle and spit with greater effect. But still it was a re-action, that was guilty of much injustice and error, and threatened to bring the country sports of our ancestors into undeserved odium and even disuse. Soon it was felt that it would be wiser to try and elevate those generous and invigorating pastimes from the filth and blackguardism that surrounded them, than to brand them and their advocates as mean and besotted. To do this was not a difficult task ; for the writers who undertook it had upon their side the deep, firm, abiding sentiments of the nation, and all the pleasant associations of the country—the brisk air, bright landscape, and cheering music—which make the most obstinate defenders of cities still keep their best love for rural scenes.

Mr. John Mills may be taken as a good representative of this school, which has of late years become much more numerous than when he first joined it. His family is of Suffolk extraction, his father having been some years since the proprietor of Brandeston Hall—one of the most picturesque, as well as ancient, seats in that county.

Mr. Mills's excellent and highly popular works are "The Old English Gentleman," "The Stage Coach, or the Road of Life," "Christmas in the Olden Time," "The Life of a

Fox-hound," "The Belle of the Village; or, 'Tis not all Gold that Glitters," "Our County," "The Life of a Race-horse," and "The Wheel of Life."

LADY SYDNEY MORGAN.

THIS celebrated and voluminous writer was born in Dublin in or about the year 1783, and consequently is now of an age far beyond that ordinarily granted to those who attain to venerable years. But though her ladyship is more than eighty, her intellects are as active and her spirits as buoyant, as when two generations since she made her *début* in the most brilliant society of London as the "Wild Irish Girl." Her house is still frequented by the most distinguished men of letters and leading personages in the world of fashion, and it is rare for a stranger of any note to visit our shores and quit them without having sought an introduction to the author of "Woman and her Master."

Lady Morgan's maiden name was Sydney Owenson, and her father, besides being nearly related to Oliver Goldsmith, has two good claims on our respect, for he was one of the best professional actors the Irish stage possessed, and was the author of several popular Irish songs. Mr. Owenson was also the friend and protector of the poet Dermody.

Lady Morgan's literary career commenced in the last century, years before Byron published a line, or Moore had fascinated voluptuaries with "Tom Little's" poems. Her first volume was a collection of short pieces in verse, and was produced by her pen ere she had completed her fourteenth year. From that early period till her eyesight failed her some years since, she was a most industrious writer, having favoured the world with not less than seventy distinct volumes. Of her numerous achievements in almost every department of literary composition, the best known are

"The Lay of the Irish Harp," the precursor of *Moore's Irish Melodies*, "St. Clair, or the Heiress of Desmond," "The Novice of St. Dominick," "The Wild Irish Girl," "Patriotic Sketches," "Ida," "The Missionary," "O'Donnell," "Florence Macarthy," "The O'Briens and O'Flahertys," "The Book of the Boudoir," "The Princess," "France," "Italy," "Dramatic Scenes from Real Life," "The Life and Times of Salvator Rosa," and lastly, "Woman and her Master," which was published in 1840.

It was in 1811 that Miss Owenson while on a visit to the Marquis of Abercorn, made the acquaintance of her husband Sir Charles Morgan, the physician, and author of "Sketches of the Philosophy of Life and Morals." Subsequently to the publication of "Woman and her Master" in 1840, Lady Morgan, in conjunction with her husband, delighted the educated world with those two pleasant volumes of sketches entitled "The Book without a Name."

Amongst the many appropriately bestowed pensions granted during Lord Grey's administration, was one of £300, from the Civil List to Lady Morgan. This pension her ladyship still enjoys (and long may she continue to do so) in that interesting society of wits and people of fashion, of which her extraordinary conversational powers are the principal attraction and delight.

DINAH MARIA MULOCH.

AMONGST living novelists there are few who are superior to Miss Muloch. As a painter of domestic life, and a delineator of rural manners, she is unequalled. It is true, that while reading her works we never forget her sex; but it is that fact which constitutes, perhaps, their principal charm, and to which they are indebted for their best influences. Her men all love like women; but when *such* a

woman is the author, would we have them love like men? We have often been told, that the reason we have so many successful female novelists is because ladies are their readers but Miss Muloch's works are especially read and admired by men. And for men they will continue to have a peculiar charm; for in their pages the rougher and sterner sex feel themselves appealed to by a woman who, though richly endowed with intellect, is inspired by the heart, and guided by the promptings of affection, and who tells her simple tales of the fearful things of life with sacred earnestness and gentle solemnity.

Miss Muloch was born at Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, in 1826. Her first novel, "The Ogilvies," was published when she was in her 24th year; and since then she has produced "Olive," "The Head of the Family," "Alice Learmont," "Agatha's Husband," "Avillion and other tales," "John Halifax, Gentleman," and "Nothing New." Besides these works of fiction, and numerous papers for magazines, she has written for children several books, such as "Rhoda's Lessons," "Cola Monti, the story of a Genius," "A Hero," "Bread upon the Waters," and "The Little Lychetts," "A Woman's Thoughts about Woman," &c., &c.

COLONEL ELMERS NAPIER.

THE Napiers are good soldiers, good sailors, and almost to a man good writers. Even the letters of the fine old admiral, published in the *Times* with all their mistakes of grammar and spelling, preserved with mischievous fidelity by the editor, are excellent in a certain way. They are vigorous and honest, and their curt, rugged, angry sentences fall like a shower of sledge-hammers. Colonel Elmers Napier has written much, and well, on a variety of subjects, but in

no department of literature has he more decidedly succeeded than in fiction. His "Linesman" is as good a military novel as Gleig, or Grant, or Maxwell have produced. Some of its scenes may offend the over-delicate, and some of its descriptions—that, for instance, of a military flogging—are excruciatingly painful; but when the author shocks our feelings, he always has a good reason for doing so. Indeed, throughout the tale one recognises the frankness, courage, and manly generosity which, more than their great mental endowments, are the pleasing characteristics of all the celebrated Napiers.

CAROLINE ELIZABETH NORTON, THE HON.

THE Honourable Mrs. Norton, the sister of the Duchess of Somerset and Lady Dufferin, a daughter of Thomas Sheridan, and grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was married when she was only nineteen years of age, on 30th of July, 1827, to the Hon. George Chapple Norton, a brother of the present Lord Grantley, and a police-magistrate, and the recorder of Guildford.

The genius of the Sheridans speaks emphatically in this lady, who has long been admired for her singular beauty, not less than she has been the object of universal sympathy for her sorrows. In the entire range of our literature there is no poetess, with the exception of Mrs. Browning, to rank with her. In prose she is scarcely less fervid than she is in her metrical compositions. Clearness of observation, lucid arrangement of ideas, and nervous force of melodious language—often impetuous, often overpoweringly tender, and always deeply affecting—are her principle characteristics as a writer. She has not exerted herself much—or rather frequently—as a writer of prose fiction, but her sad, sad tale, "Stuart of Dunleath," shows that she has the capability to be as great a novelist as she is a poetess.

For the rest, the world cannot do better than repeat her lines, and take them to heart:—

“For they who credit crime, are they who feel
Their own hearts weak to unresisted sin ;
Memory, not judgment, prompts the thoughts which steal
O'er minds like these, an easy faith to win ;
And tales of broken truth are still believed
Most readily by those who have themselves deceived.”

MARGARET OLIPHANT.

SCOTTISH stories have always been favourites with the public, and the best living writer of them is, beyond question, Mrs. Oliphant. It is now several years since she became famous in her department of literature ; and each new work from her pen has so many signs of increasing mental vigour that there is now no fear of her ever sinking from the high place which “*Passages in the Life of Mrs. M. Maitland*,” won for her. Her principal works, besides the “*Life of Mrs. M. Maitland*,” are “*C. Field: a Tale of the Puritans*,” “*Merkland, a Story of Scottish Life*,” “*Memoirs and Revelations of A. Græme*,” “*Harry Muir: a Story of Scottish Life*,” “*Magdalen Hepburn*,” “*Zaidee: a Romance*,” and “*The Days of my Life*.”

JULIA PARDOE.

Miss Pardoe has been a writer of position and celebrity for considerably more than twenty years, but her passion for authorship displayed itself long before the world took much notice of her, for like Lady Morgan and Mrs. Norton she published her first work ere she was fairly emancipated from the nursery. At six years of age she commenced literary composition, and in her fourteenth year she presented the world with a volume of poems.

Some considerable time after this juvenile outburst she produced an historical novel, entitled "Lord Morcar of Hereward," and since the date of that publication her pen has given us "Traits and Traditions of Portugal," "Speculation," a novel, "The Mardens and the Daventrys," a novel, "The City of the Sultan," "The River and the Desert; or, Recollections of the Rhone and the Chartreuse," "The Romance of the Harem," a series of tales, "The Beauties of the Bosphorus," "The City of the Magyar; or, Hungary and its Institutions," "The Hungarian Castle," a novel, "Louis XIV.: or, the Court of the Seventeenth Century," "The Confessions of a Pretty Woman," a novel, "The Rival Beauties," a novel, "The Life of Francis I.," "The Life of Marie de Medici," "Reginald Lyle," a novel, "Flies in Amber," a series of tales, "The Jealous Wife," a novel, &c., &c.

In these numerous works, Miss Pardoe has shown herself capable of constructing ingenious plots, of charming by lively, and at times, gorgeously coloured narrative, and of giving an attractive and novel exposition of history.

She was born at Beverley, in Yorkshire, and her father was a field-officer in the army. Naturally observant, of an ardent poetic temperament, and yet endowed with no ordinary reflective powers, she has been, in many respects, favourably circumstanced for the development of her intellect. Delicate health at an early part of her life secured her the quiet retirement necessary for meditation and study, and her extended travels have supplied her susceptible mind and retentive memory with the best possible materials for thought.

CONSTANTINE HENRY PHIPPS, MARQUIS OF
NORMANBY.

IF we wished to throw an aristocratic lustre over the fraternity of novelists, we could produce a startling list of

living magnates who have published anonymously prose fictions. One of our ex-Lord Chancellors has a novel of no great excellence attributed to him by general rumour; and a feeble tale about a nun of very dubious moral tendency, is, by the same authority, asserted to have come from the pen of a distinguished statesman, the universality of whose mental endowments has for many a day been the cause of satiric pleasantries. Usually, however, illustrious personages, knowing that it is far easier to be an average statesman than a wretchedly bad novelist, have the prudence to guard with jealousy the secret of their being authors till their works have attained a celebrity calculated to add to the *éclat* of their rank. Lord Normanby is one of these noble writers. In 1825, he published his first novel with the mawkish and namby-pamby title of "Matilda," which was followed in 1828 by "Yes and No." Both these works are very well-printed specimens of the stuff—in the way of fashionable romance—that in this great and free country any man may favour the public with who is able to pay a handsome sum to a West End publisher.

It is true that Lord Normanby's name does not appear on the title-pages of these fictions, and that from motives that need not be enlarged upon we have in these pages avoided dragging anonymous authors from the privacy it is their wish to maintain. Still, the parentage of "Amelia," and "Yes and No," is so generally known that we cannot feel ourselves guilty of any violation of delicacy in pointing to the noble Marquis as a representative of the class in literature to which he belongs.

MARGUERITE A. POWER.

As Miss Austin is represented in this generation by her niece Mrs. Hubback, and Captain Marryat by his daugh-

ter, so the memory of Lady Blessington is kept alive in literary circles by her niece, Miss Power, who, besides editing for two years "The Keepsake," and writing a memoir of her aunt, has published "Evelyn Forrester, a Woman's Story," and another novel. From the means we have as yet had of judging of Miss Power's capabilities as a writer, we should say that she will be rather injured than benefited by associating her name and genius with her aunt; for unquestionably "Evelyn Forrester" is altogether superior to any work of fiction that proceeded from Lady Blessington's pen.

CHARLES READE, D.C.L. (BARRISTER), &c. &c.

THIS gentleman was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, of which society he is at the present time a fellow. In the year 1835 he went through the edifying ceremony of taking his B.A. degree. In 1842 he obtained the higher distinction of being elected to [one of the Vinerian fellowships; and at the commencement of the following year, having kept his terms at Lincoln's Inn, he was called to the bar.

With the exception of "Jane Eyre" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," it may be safely asserted that no novel, not published in numbers, has of late years created such a sensation as Mr. Reade's "It is Never too Late to Mend." Besides this wonderful production, which has already been accepted as "a standard work," Mr. Reade is the author of other tales of singular force and merit, well known to the readers of "Christie Johnson," "Peg Woffington," "White Lies," and "Cream;" and in conjunction with Mr. Tom Taylor, he has presented dramatic literature with "Masks and Faces," "The King's Rival," and "Two Loves and a Life."

MAYNE REID.

THE author of "The Rifle Rangers," "The Scalp Hunters," "The White Chief," and numerous other works, was born in 1818, in the North of Ireland. The career of this excellent writer and gallant soldier, in daring adventure and shifting fortune, has surpassed all that romance has imagined for its most dashing and eccentric heroes. His early education for the Presbyterian Church, his excursions on the Red River, his experiences as a writer at Philadelphia, the desperate gallantry with which he led the forlorn hope at Chapultepec, and the brilliant style in which he disappointed all his friends, who believed him to have been killed, by rising from the battle-field to carry off as his bride the richest heiress of Mexico, are only a few features of that stormy course which Captain Mayne Reid has run, to the utter astonishment of us quiet mortals, whose lives are written in our tradesmen's bills.

LEITCH RITCHIE.

WE should much like to enter at length into the consideration of the genius of this graphic writer of fiction, for he is unquestionably one of the leading literary personages of his time, and we owe him no small debt of gratitude for amusement and instruction; but the general design of this work, and our want of space, compel us only to briefly mention his name. To enumerate all his achievements would be difficult, for besides being an industrious writer of articles and essays for journals and magazines, and a successful editor, he has produced between thirty and forty original volumes. Those who have read "Head Pieces and Tail Pieces," "Tales and Confessions," "Schinderhannes, the Robber of the Rhine," "The Game of Life," "The

Magician," and "Weryfoot Common," need no assurance of their author being a highly gifted writer.

Mr. Ritchie was born at the commencement of the present century in Greenock, and has for some years acted as editor of Messrs. W. and R. Chambers' "Journal" at Edinburgh.

ELIZABETH SEWELL.

THE literary fecundity of the female authors of the present century is positively marvellous, and can never be surpassed. In former times we have had a Duchess of Newcastle and an Aphra Behn occupying themselves assiduously at the desk, but here, in this age of wonders, we have dozens, scores, ay hundreds of ladies, accomplished, well read, reflective, witty, and facile with the pen, producing in a month "a bulk of copy" which either of the above-mentioned *femmes d'esprit* would have wanted a year to manufacture. At such a prodigious rate are books—and good books too—poured forth from female pens, that we would undertake to furnish an enormous library with those that have been published in this country during the last fifty years. The cases of Lady Morgan, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Trollope, Miss Yonge, and Miss Sewell, indicate that this task would be of no difficult accomplishment.

In thirteen years, Miss Sewell has given us sixteen separate works. Her tales are universal favourites, being liked even by those who do not concur in many of the opinions and sentiments on minor religious subjects contained in them. It would be unfair to classify them with "religious novels," for religious novels as a rule are very dull, notwithstanding their bitterness of personal satire, and very feeble, notwithstanding their acrimony; whereas Miss Sewell's stories, pure of the slightest approach to dogma-

tism and cant, are gentle, womanly, and vigorous pictures of life, in which the views of the school to which the authoress belongs, are never obtruded on our notice, but only appear as a soft, solemn light, hallowing to her all objects of human interest. The names of them it is scarcely necessary to repeat, for it can hardly be that any one will read this page who is not well acquainted with "Amy Herbert," "Gertrude," "Laneton Parsonage," "Margaret Percival," "Katherine Ashton," "Cleve Hall," &c., &c.

The mention of Miss Sewell's name brings to mind that of her brother, the Rev. William Sewell, B.D., who has edited several of her works. This wise and good man may also be regarded as belonging to the fraternity of novelists, for "Hawkestone; a tale of and for England in 184—," was written by him, though we believe he has never formally claimed the parentage of it.

CATHERINE SINCLAIR.

MISS SINCLAIR, who has long been a chief ornament of the truly intellectual society of Edinburgh, was born in Charlotte Square, in that city, on the 17th of April, 1800. Her father was the energetic and famous Right Hon. Sir John Sinclair, Bart., and her mother was Diana, daughter of Lord Macdonald of the Isles.

Though Miss Sinclair published at an earlier date her charming books for children, "Charlie Seymour," and "The Lives of the Cæsars," it was not till after the death of her father that she strenuously applied herself to authorship. Her first novel, "Modern Accomplishments," was followed in due course by "Modern Society," "Hill and Valley," "Scotland and the Scotch," "Holiday House," "The Journey of Life," "The Business of Life," "Sir Edward Graham," "Modern Flirtations," "Lord and Lady Harcourt,"

"Beatrice," "Cross Purposes," and "The Kaleidoscope of Anecdotes and Aphorisms." This collection of works, varied in style and objects, entitles Miss Sinclair to the reputation of being amongst *the best*, as she unquestionably is, amongst *the most popular*, of English female writers.

For some time the energies of this lady have been devoted to the supervision of a benevolent institution for the widows of officers in the army. Thus the list of her good works is not made up solely of those which have passed through the presses of printing offices.

FRANCIS E. SMEDLEY.

MR. SMEDLEY is a young writer; but as he has none of the faults of youth, his want of age is something in his favour. With the dash and broad humour of Lever, he has a delicate playfulness and a manly tenderness, which the author of "Harry Lorrequer" cannot be said to possess. Mr. Smedley is a good judge of a horse, and on paper he can manage a vicious rasper to perfection, but he knows yet more about women, and if his writings may be trusted would not find it difficult to curb the wildest of them. He has a strong, sturdy, boisterous love of the ridiculous, but his laughter is by no means all for practical jokes; perhaps he is in his happiest and most pleasant humour when he indulges in a tone of sly, naïve, half-subdued merriment. He has written well, but his genius has not yet done justice to itself. His principal works are "Frank Fairlegh, or Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil," published in 1850, and "Harry Coverdale's Courtship, and all that came of it," published in 1854-55. Besides these admirable novels, he is the author of an excellent Christmas story, and of numerous sketches and tales, published in various maga-

zines; and in 1855 he and Mr. Edmund Yates, the popular *feuilletoniste*, amused the world with "Mirth and Metre," a collection of comic ballads and verses, the ingenuity and fun of which have been equalled by no similar publication since the appearance of "The Ingoldsby Legends."

ALBERT SMITH.

THIS gentleman, who has for more than fifteen years been one of the especial favourites of the public as a wit, an author, and a lecturer, was born May 24, 1816, at Chertsey, where his father was a medical practitioner. After receiving the education of boyhood at the Merchant Taylors' School, he became a medical student at the Middlesex Hospital. In 1838 he became a member of the College of Surgeons, and after a brief sojourn at Paris, for the purpose of completing his professional education, assisted his father as "a general practitioner" at Chertsey. He soon, however, gave up all thoughts of settling in the country, and fixing himself in London began to form a connection with newspapers and magazines. At one time, while waiting till his pen should enable him altogether to lay aside the profession of surgery, he practised with some success as a dentist; indeed, the first of his puns that we ever heard was one he somewhat indiscreetly fired off while removing some "tartar" from a lady's teeth.

Besides dramas, farces, sketches, and *brochures* without number, Albert Smith has published "The Wassail Bowl, a collection of tales and sketches," "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury," "The Scattergood Family," "Christopher Tadpole," "The Marchioness of Brinvilliers," "The Pottleton Legacy," "A Month at Constantinople," and "The Story of Mont Blanc." In some of these works there is much of the style of Dickens, and doubtless the earlier writings of

Boz contributed in no small degree to the literary formation of Mr. Albert Smith, but no one competent to form an opinion will deny that the author of "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury" is as original as he is amusing.

On the 26th of May, 1850, Mr. Smith opened his popular entertainment "The Overland Mail," and on the 15th of March, 1852, he commenced in the Egyptian Hall his famous ascents of Mont Blanc. The success of this latter entertainment is one of the astounding facts of the day. In the May of 1855 Mr. Albert Smith, gave it for the *thousandth* time, and we verily believe that, were he to go on repeating it with the same spirit till he reached a hundred years of age, he would be favoured with the same overflowing houses. "Mont Blanc," unlike the leading theatres, is not supported only by the fixed inhabitants of our great capital and those wealthy individuals who reside in town during "the season," but it is the place of amusement which the country people, who visit London every one or two years for a week or fortnight of pleasuring, have taken under their especial patronage. They are honestly proud of it. If they hear it attacked, they defend it as they would the Queen's reputation; and they would be affected with sincere sorrow if they were informed that they would never again laugh their way up the rugged sides of the monarch of mountains. It is this—that Mr. Smith's clients are not merely the well-to-do multitudes of all London, but of the entire country, which emboldens us to say, he need not fear his "ascents" will ever cease to be popular.

It is common to hear Mr. Albert Smith's position as a lecturer spoken of in literary circles with disrespect and even with bitterness, as if he forgot his own dignity, and insulted the profession of literature in performing at the Egyptian Hall. To these sentiments we by no means give in our adhesion; at the same time we of course do not for a minute doubt that those who profess them most loudly would

unhesitatingly refuse a fortune offered to them on the same terms as those which are the conditions of Mr. Albert Smith's tenure of popularity and pecuniary success.

JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN.

THIS excellent writer and persevering scholar has rendered good service to literature, not only in his works, but also in begetting three sons as elegant and accomplished authors as himself. Mr. James Augustus St. John's best known works of fiction are "Tales of the Ramadhan," "Margaret Ravenscroft," and "Sir Cosmo Digby." The author of these works was born in Camarthenshire; and in 1819, while still a boy, married, and daringly flung himself on authorship for support. This courageous, in the opinion of some, perhaps, reckless step, has been followed by a life of stern literary exertion, diversified by bursts of foreign travel and adventure, the fruits of which will assist to render the present generation bright in the eyes of posterity.

Mr. St. John has six sons, of whom three are authors of considerable name and great promise. Mr. Bayle St. John has produced, besides numerous powerful sketches of foreign life and manners, "The Louvre," "Purple Tints of Paris," and "Maretima, a Story of Adventure." Mr. Percy St. John is the author of "The King's Musketeer, an Historical Romance," "Paul Peabody," and numerous other works of fiction; and Mr. Horace St. John is honourably known by his "Indian Archipelago," and "History of the British Conquests in India."

AGNES STRICKLAND.

MISS AGNES STRICKLAND and her four sisters are instances of the lavish contributions "Silly Suffolk" has made to the intellectual wealth of the nation. Daughters of the late Thomas Strickland, Esq., of Reydon Hall, Suffolk, a gentleman of a small landed estate, these five sisters have added not a little to the lustre of their old and honourable name. The value of the historical labours of Miss Agnes and Miss Elizabeth Strickland is now universally acknowledged; they have been accepted as authorities of reference; able historians take their statements with perfect belief in their accuracy, and sometimes forget to acknowledge the source of their information; and they have directed the attention of persevering students to mines of historic learning which had long been neglected, even by antiquarians.

Besides the high reputation Miss Agnes Strickland has achieved by her "Lives of the Queens," she is favourably known to novel readers by her historical romance, "The Pilgrim of Walsingham." But the consumers of light literature have more reason to be grateful to Catherine, Susannah, and Jane, than to the two other sisters (*Elizabeth* and *Agnes*) who have devoted their time and genius to the less attractive fields of historical research. Miss Jane Margaret Strickland has produced numerous stories, of which "Adonijah, a tale of the Jewish dispersion," is, perhaps, the best known. Catherine, the wife of Lieutenant Trail, formerly of the 21st Royal North British Fusiliers, has sent from Canada—whither she went with her husband immediately after her marriage—to London publishers, "The Backwoods of America, by the Wife of an Emigrant," and the "Canadian Crusoes." And Susannah—the wife of John Dunbar Moodie, Esq., also formerly an officer of the 21st Royal North British Fusiliers—who, like her sister,

emigrated to Canada soon after her marriage, has for several years maintained a brisk intercourse with the mother country by a succession of novels and sketches, of which we may mention "Flora Lyndsay," "Life in the Clearings," "Mark Hurdlestone," "Matrimonial Speculations," "The Moncktons," &c., &c.

GEORGE W. THORNBURY.

AMONGST the crowds of young men of ready wit and extensive reading, who form the rising generation of authors, Mr. Thornbury stands forth prominently and honourably. A patient and laborious student, he has acquired a store of knowledge rarely possessed by one who from early youth has fought the battle of life with the pen. Besides contributing articles without number to the leading magazines and the columns of the *Athenæum*, he has given to the world a succession of distinct works, in which he appears to equal advantage, whether regarded as an antiquarian, a poet, an historian, or a biographer. In 1851 appeared "Lays and Legends, or Ballads of the New World," and since then he has produced "Monarchs of the Main, or Adventures of the Buccaneers," "Shakspeare's England," "Art and Nature," "Songs of the Cavaliers and Roundheads," and several minor works.

As a novelist, Mr. Thornbury is not much known to the public, though they are few who have not been delighted with the remarkable tales he has anonymously sprinkled over the pages of serials. But a novel, it is rumoured in literary circles, will shortly appear from his pen in the orthodox three volumes, entitled "Every Man his own Trumpeter."

The work, however, which is looked for with general eagerness and especial longing from this author, is the

"Life of Turner," which he has undertaken with the approval and encouragement of Ruskin, and several distinguished artists who were intimately connected with the great painter. In his treatment of this subject it is confidently anticipated that Mr. Thornbury will win lasting laurels, for he is not only a painter of no ordinary merit, but he is one of the best art-critics living, and has a lively admiration for Turner's genius. Perhaps never has an author had a better field for the display of his peculiar talents.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

In the person of this most agreeable writer, another firm and strong tie has been placed between fictitious literature and the name of Trollope. "La Vendee: an Historical Romance," published in 1850, did not gain more attention or in any respect greater commendation than first attempts usually meet with. But the last three novels that have come from Mr. Trollope's pen within the last three years, have received the praise and circulation they merit. We sincerely trust that the author of "The Warden," "The Three Clerks," and "Barchester Towers," will go on as he has begun, and not cease writing ere his works are as numerous as those of the eminent lady who, bearing his name, has preceded him in time, but is not before him in genius.

FRANCES TROLLOPE.

No catalogue of celebrated English novelists would be complete without the name of this lady, whose rare endowments seem to have descended to her son. Mrs. Trollope has been much abused, sometimes justly, and sometimes unjustly. She is censured by ladies who plume themselves

on their refinement and delicacy ; but then such ladies are apt to be so very squeamish and particular ; and she is hated by America—but then America, like a young lady in her teens, has not yet acquired the dignified composure of self-respect—blushes when she is stared at, and indulges in a fit of crying when the make of her dress is condemned, or her manners are said to be unformed. Without a doubt, Mrs. Trollope has her foes, but she has also a powerful army of adherents. Circulating libraries cannot do without her, for the more time-honoured patronesses of those much frequented and traduced sources of entertainment cry out for “Mrs. Trollope’s last” at least nine times where they ask for the more decorous productions of Miss Yonge. It is all well for reviews, the writers of which are in favour of mediæval restorations and mild womanly proprieties, to say that the author of “The Vicar of Wrexhill” has out-written herself, and grown dull ; it may be so, but in that case her faithful readers have undergone a similar deterioration, for they are as much amused by the Mrs. Trollope, who has numbered seventy winters, as they were by the Mrs. Trollope of a quarter of a century since.

Mrs. Trollope was born about the year 1787 ; but it was not till she had fairly entered upon middle life that she began her brilliant career as an author. In 1829 she visited America, and after a residence in that country for three years, published the work which made the old world laugh, and the new howl with rage, “Domestic Manners of the Americans.” Much of this work is as valuable as it is amusing, and we see no reason to question the author’s truthfulness of intention ; but the picture of life it contains, taken as a whole, must be sentenced as calumnious and false. It is difficult for sketches of a comparatively strange society to be otherwise. The artist, let his will be ever so honest, is more impressed by the new and grotesque and unusual, than he is by that which accords with old

associations, which is matter-of-fact, or which does not contradict the ordinary monotony of existence. The scenes put on his paper are too highly coloured by what tickled him. This egotism is inseparable from a painter of manners. His object is to amuse others, and he can do this only by repeating what amused himself. Bent on creating a favourable impression, on making a striking picture, on avoiding the reputation of being a dull fellow, he insensibly falls into a habit of setting down that which will tickle and excite laughter, rather than that which is calculated to instruct. Thus, even if he does not fall into mistakes of attributing the manners of one class to another from failing to estimate the position of his companions, he becomes a caricaturist in giving undue prominence to a certain class of ludicrous or startling incidents.

Amongst Mrs. Trollope's best known works of imagination are "The Refugee of America," "The Abbess," "The Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw," "The Vicar of Wrexhill," "Tremordyn Cliff," "The Widow Barnaby," "The Widow Married," "The Blue Belles of England," "Hargreave; or, the Adventures of a Man of Fashion," "The Larringtons; or, Inferior People," "The Clever Woman," &c., &c.

MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER.

THE author of "Proverbial Philosophy," a work much esteemed by country clergymen, and copies of which are extensively used as prizes in young ladies' schools, was born in London in 1811, the same year that saw Thackeray enter life, and was educated at Charterhouse, the same school where the author of the Newcomes became acquainted with Virgil and Homer and mastered the graceful art of making Greek and Latin verses.

From Charterhouse Mr. Tupper proceeded to Oxford, where he obtained respectable honours; and on quitting Alma Mater with his degree, he consumed the required number of dinners at Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the bar. Though a member of the legal profession, he has never practised in the Inns or Courts of Law, but has devoted his vigorous and polished intellects to literary pursuits. As a poet, he has been handled by the critics not less cruelly than was Robert Montgomery, but like Mr. Montgomery he has had substantial consolation for the severe castigations he has received from the self-elected judges of his art in the positively enormous circulation of his metrical compositions—a circulation far exceeding that of Tennyson's works. And this great success is in some measure merited; for, though no sane man would attempt to defend the pompous balderdash and blatant emptiness of many passages of "The Proverbial Philosophy," it cannot be denied that much of Mr. Tupper's poetry embodies noble thoughts, long and deeply meditated, and that several of his ballads for their healthiness of sentiment, vigour of expression, and command over the reader's affections are beyond praise.

As a novelist, Mr. Tupper has not a very distinguished place in literature; but the artistic strength and many beauties of "The Crock of Gold," "The Heart, a Social Novel," and "The Times, a Domestic Novel," make us wish that he would again undertake a work of prose fiction.

SAMUEL WARREN, D.C.L., F.R.S., Q.C., M.P.

THE reputation of this author is very wide, but still not a very desirable one. His works have been extensively circulated, and are universally admired by all persons possessed of any refinement natural or acquired. The motto on the title-page of the "Diary of a late Physician," the

famous observation of Dr. Johnson, "What is nearest us touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies," is peculiarly in place, and would apply with equal force to all Mr. Warren's tales. But, unfortunately, the incidents of his fictions are not more common than the style in which they are narrated. His sketches abound in striking positions, and scenes which arouse vehement passions. But he subdues us not by delicate touches, gradually and imperceptibly winning us to tenderness, but by tremendous blows of a sledge-hammer. Terror is the feeling he especially delights to excite, but we never find much subtlety in the means by which he sets about his work. He fiercely proclaims his intentions at the outset, to frighten us out of our wits, to horrify us, to make women shriek with dismay and men tremble in their boots. The very titles of the stories making up the "Diary of a late Physician," strike the heart with a cold pang. Take a few of them:—"Cancer," "A Scholar's Death-bed," "Intriguing and Madness," "Consumption," "The Spectral Dog," "The Forger," "The Ruined Merchant," "The Destroyer." What a series of ghastly sickening scenes of infamy, violence, and physical agony do these *labels* suggest! Such is the fashion in which Mr. Warren opens shop. He is Monk Lewis without the blue fire. He undertakes to supply any painful sensation, from nausea to convulsive weeping. It is needless to say that his wares are popular. These remarks may be made as justly of his other works of fiction as of the "Diary." They are all powerful, but only to scare and horrify; we find in them little or no analysis of character, no suggestive philosophisings, no humorous illustrations of important doctrines, no playfulness, no delicate pathos; the narrative is frequently clumsy, never forcible from simplicity, and ever, as the crisis of the story is approached, indescribably bombastic. But still we are affected—against our will, our judgment, our good taste;

and as we read the coarsely-worded scenes of mental suffering, excruciating disease, and human nerves quivering under the tortures of hell, our determination to be stoical gives way, and fairly cudgelled into submission, we burst into hysterical sobs.

Mr. Warren was born in Denbighshire, in 1807, and is now fifty years of age. His father was for many years a Dissenting minister, but was subsequently ordained a clergyman of the Church of England. At first Mr. Warren was designed for the medical profession, but after pursuing his studies for that vocation for a short time, he resolved, in September, 1827, to turn his energies to the bar.

His literary aspirations commenced at an early period of youth. In 1823, when still in his seventeenth year, he wrote to Sir Walter Scott, and addressing him as the "great unknown" author of the Waverly Novels, asked his advice about the publication of some boyish attempt at authorship. Sir Walter, who clearly regarded the letter as an impertinent attempt to entrap him into avowing himself as "the great unknown," responded with dubious morality, "I am not the author of those novels which the world chooses to ascribe to me, and am therefore unworthy of the praises due to that individual, whoever he may prove to be." Sir Walter after penning this painful falsehood, proceeded somewhat caustically to refer his correspondent for information concerning publishing to the publishers.

Besides his novels, which are the "Diary of a late Physician," "Ten Thousand a Year," and "Now and Then," Mr. Warren has written several law-books and numerous essays for Blackwood's Magazine, and in 1851 he treated the public with that heavy and inexplicable piece of balderdash, "The Lily and the Bee," which we are quite ready to regard as a perfect expression of what he thinks a poem ought to be.

Mr. Samuel Warren is Recorder for Hull, and M.P. for

Midhurst. He has not yet been long enough in the House to show whether he has the requisite capabilities for effecting a parliamentary triumph, but he has already spoken on a few occasions without producing any very favourable impression. He is a Conservative and a follower of Lord Derby.

EDWARD M. WHITTY.

LIKE many, we might almost say most, of our best living writers, Mr. Whitty is not indebted to the training of any of our great public schools or universities. It was in Germany that he prepared himself for the task of journalism, to which he has chiefly, and until of late *solely*, devoted his powers. "The Times," and the "Leader," are the two metropolitan papers that have especially profited by his genius. As a keen-sighted politician, gifted with an unusual share of satiric strength, and with a rare knowledge of the history and structure of parties, and the nature of party-warfare, he is known to the general public, who are not permitted to penetrate the veil of anonymous literature, by his "History of the Session of 1852," and his "Governing Classes." It was not till 1857 that he published his first avowed work of prose fiction, "Friends of Bohemia, or Phases of London Life." The sensation which this remarkable novel created on its first appearance, in the clubs and coteries of London, is fresh in the minds of all who take active part in the literature, politics, or pleasure of the capital. The originality and freshness of its satire would have gained it admirers, whatever had been the principal topics it dwelt upon; but when it was noised abroad that it contained masterly and most unkind sketches of the foremost personages in our political arena, love of mischief, and

perhaps of scandal also, gave an impulse to love of art; and the excitement of amusement or anger became general. The "Athenæum," in a vigorous article, generously recognised the excellence of the story, and with manly frankness, not often displayed in criticism to authors making a first essay in an untried field, bestowed cordial praise on the author. The Americans, always on the look-out for good English novels, and always giving a preference to those which are spiced with personality, speedily reprinted the work, and that they highly relished the dish set before them, is evidenced by the enormous sale it has met with throughout the States and Canada.

It is understood that Mr. Whitty is now engaged on another novel. What its subject is does not transpire; but if it equal its precursor in merit, it will be good indeed.

FOLKESTONE WILLIAMS, F.R.G.S.

OF the numerous writers to whom the present generation is indebted for instruction and amusement few have more claims on our respect and gratitude than Mr. Folkestone Williams, Professor of Ancient and Modern History, &c., of the Cavalry College, Richmond. The son of a London surgeon, he was educated for his father's profession, and had the advantages of commencing his medical studies as a pupil of Guthrie. But a strong bias for literature carried him from the curriculum of the hospitals, and he boldly determined to throw away the lancet, and rely on the pen as a means of pushing his fortunes. Whatever may have been the result of this decision to Mr. Williams, there can be little doubt that the world has gained by it. For nearly thirty years he has been actively engaged as an author, and has contributed in no slight degree to the edification of the reading public. The entire list of his works we have not

space to give; but in enumerating the best of them we should mention of his novels, "Mephistophiles in England," "Eureka," "Youth of Shakspeare," "Shakspeare and his Friends," "Maids of Honour," "Strawberry Hill," and "The Luttrells;" and of his historical works we should point to "Memoirs of Sophia Dorothea," "Court and Times of James I." "Court and Times of Charles I.," and "Memoirs of Horace Walpole."

The Shakspeare novels, as they are usually called, are perhaps the works by which Mr. Williams is best known. Their design is of course open to the same critical objections that are properly advanced against Mr. Disraeli's ambitious attempt to delineate and illustrate the genius of Byron and Shelley. But though the reader may feel that it is beyond the power of fiction to add beauty or power to that image of Shakspeare which is the constant companion of every polished mind, he is not the less delighted with the true poetic earnestness, the graceful familiarity with the manners of Elizabethan England, the scholarly style, and refined humour, which render the writings of Mr. Williams deserving of high rank in recent literature.

For a considerable period Mr. Folkestone Williams was sub-editor and subsequently editor of the "New Monthly Magazine," and he has also contributed in some measure to the reputation of Captain Marryat and Theodore Hook; for he wrote more than one third of "The Little Savage," which was left unfinished by the former author, and he composed the concluding chapters of "Fathers and Sons"—the novel which Hook was employed upon when death closed his career.

CAPTAIN CHARLES LASCELLES WRAXALL.

THE name and family of Wraxall, of Somersetshire, are inseparably connected with literature. Sir Nathaniel

William Wraxall (descended from Sir John de Wraxall, who represented Somerset and Dorset in parliament under Edward I.) besides occupying a distinguished position in the civil service of the East India Company as judge-advocate and paymaster of the troops of the Bombay presidency, on the two expeditions to Guzerat and Baroche in 1771 achieved a high reputation as an author. Besides his "Tour round the Baltic," he left behind him several works, of which the best known are the notorious "Historical Memoirs of his own Times," and the not less celebrated "Memoirs," which were not published till death had secured him from the terrors of King's Bench law, which had severely punished him for the boldness of the former work. This accomplished courtier sat in parliament for many years, the first borough he represented being Hindon, which place as we have stated in the prior pages of this work, likewise returned at different times to the lower house, Beckford and Monk Lewis; but it was not till 1813 that he was raised to the dignity of a baronet.

The subject of this memoir is the only grandson of Sir Nathaniel, and is, consequently, next heir to the title. Captain Wraxall was educated at Oxford, and after his departure from that university resided several years on the Continent, where he acquired a knowledge of the languages, and a familiar acquaintance with the manners of the principal European countries, that have been of incalculable use to him as a writer. Though he has chiefly devoted his talents to the service of newspapers and leading monthly magazines, he has found time to produce several translations from the German, and two original works. His "Hand-Book to the Naval and Military Resources of the Principal European Nations," is of great merit and value; and quite recently he has published a novel, under the title of "Wild Oats," which is in every respect a book worthy of perusal. The story is interesting, and well-

constructed, and is told with a soldierly confidence and an easy flow of satire, that are as pleasing as they are rare. But the especial claim "Wild Oats" has on the attention and generous approval of the critic is, that it is a thoroughly *honest* attempt to transplant the French novel to English soil. Previous to the tale in question, the efforts in this direction had been the reverse of felicitous, *frequently* being only audacious plagiarisms, and *never* by any chance rising above the level of barren imitation. It still remains to be decided whether the fruit of this ingraftment is good in itself, or adapted to our national palate; but there can be no doubt, that be the general sentence favourable or adverse, it is on Captain Wraxall the praise or blame must be showered.

MISS YONGE.

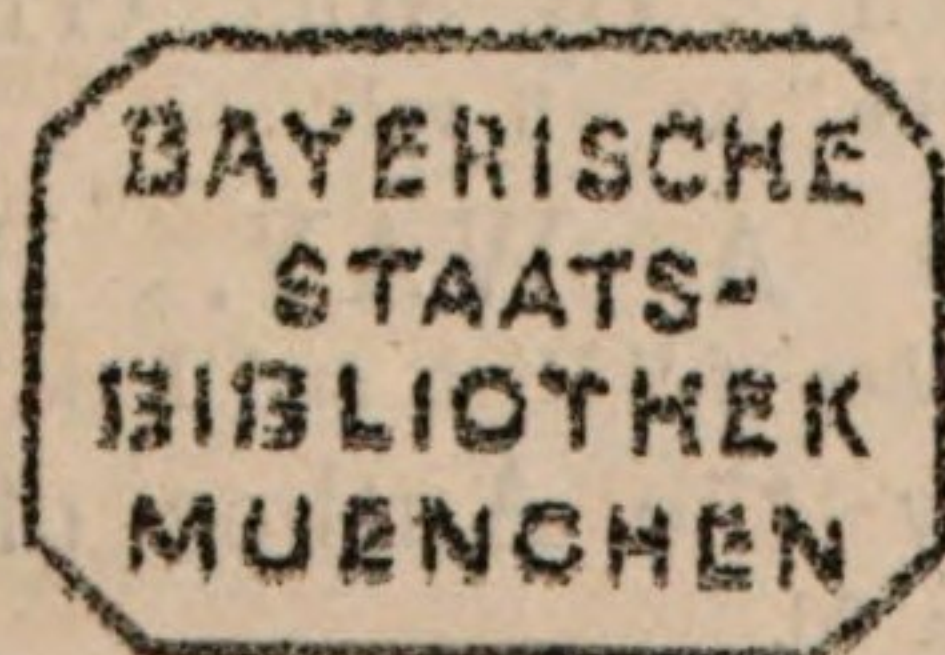
IN an enumeration of the principal leading novelists, not to mention Miss Yonge, would be a most reprehensible omission. For many years this amiable and accomplished lady has been one of the chief constructors of books for the amusement and instruction of young people, and during the later portion of her literary career she has produced at least four works of fiction that are to be ranked far above mere children's stories. The wide circulation of "The Heir of Redclyffe," "Heart's-ease," "Daisy-chain," and "Dynevor Terrace," and their very unusual literary merits place it beyond question that Miss Yonge both has and deserves to have the place of honour in her peculiar department of author-craft. As a writer of elegant stories, inculcating a healthy morality and true womanly sentiments, and eminently adapted to develop and form the tastes of young girls, at that critical period when childhood is blushing into womanly maturity, the author of "Heart's-ease" has ex-

celled all her rivals. She well deserves the £1,000 which publishers are ready to give her for a tale; for to be able to address the young and gentle, truthfully and with solemnity, on the most sacred subjects of their affections and hopes and eternal interests, and in such a manner that they find an exquisite pleasure in listening to good counsel and forming wise resolves, is a high endowment seldom to be found in any but *very superior women*.

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